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ABSTRACT

The Arizona Head Start--Public School Transition Project is 1 of 31 demonstration projects designed to test whether advances by Head Start children could be maintained by continuing Head Start-type services into kindergarten through the third grade, and to identify, develop, and implement transition practices to bridge the gap between Head Start and public schools. This study evaluated the Arizona project in its fourth year of implementation. Participating were two cohorts of students at three transition and three comparison schools in Phoenix. The program components evaluated were: (1) developmentally appropriate practices, curriculum, and materials; (2) physical health, mental health, and dental services; (3) family services; and (4) parent involvement. Findings indicated that all components had been implemented by the time of the 1995-96 evaluation. Both cohorts had similar public assistance participation, and all groups showed dramatic decreases in public assistance since program entry. The vast majority of parents from all groups reported positive interactions with schools; qualitative data confirmed continuing positive impact on teachers, schools, and the Head Start agency. Transition services, especially those of family advocates, were seen as crucial to smooth transitions. There were observable differences between transition and comparison classrooms; however, quantitative data showed few significant differences in gains made by children between transition and comparison classrooms. Confounding variables of high attrition, variations in student English proficiency, and the existence in comparison schools of transition-like services may have influenced the results. Promising practices and further challenges were identified and recommendations were made for improving the collaboration between the Head Start program and the public schools, and improving the evaluation process. (Three appendices include a summary of data collection instruments. Contains 20 references.) (KB)

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HEAD START GOES TO SCHOOL

1995-96 Evaluation Report

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Morrison Institute for Public Policy
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Arizona Head Start—Public School Transition Project

HEAD START GOES TO SCHOOL

1995-96 Evaluation Report

by
Lori Mulholland

with
Kathleen Shaw
Rick Heffernon
Mary E. Stafford

Submitted to:
Southwest Human Development, Inc.

December 1997

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Executive Summary

The Arizona Head Start—Public School Transition Project completed its fourth year of program implementation at the conclusion of the 1995-96 school year. One of 31 demonstration projects in the United States, this program is part of a national study designed to test whether advances by Head Start children in their cognitive skills, social-emotional development, and family stability can be maintained by continuing Head Start-type services into kindergarten through third grade. The project is also intended to identify, develop, and implement "transition" practices that can effectively bridge the gap between the Head Start Program and public schools.

The Arizona Head Start—Public School Transition Project involves classes at six schools in three different school districts in the city of Phoenix. Three of the schools were designated "Transition schools" and have received comprehensive transition services. Three other schools served as "Comparison schools" for the project and did not receive Transition Project services.

The conclusion of the 1995-96 school year marked the "graduation" of the first cohort of children from the third grade—and from the Transition Project. At the end of the 1996-97 school year, the second cohort will graduate third grade and a final assessment of the project will be possible.

Components of the Transition Project

The transition concept is supported by four components, or "pillars," of comprehensive family-centered services: education, health, family development, and parent involvement. Services addressing all four components were provided at all three Transition schools, with certain variations dictated by the needs and preferences of individual schools. Examples for each component follow.

- **Promoting and supporting education practices, curriculum, and materials that are developmentally appropriate:** This pillar helps Transition teachers institute "developmentally appropriate practices" (DAP) in their classrooms. Strategies include the development of individual education plans for each child, the use of related classroom materials, and opportunities for teachers to engage in intensive professional development.
- **Providing or linking children and families with needed physical health, mental health and dental services:** The health delivery system for the Transition Project is modeled after that used by Southwest Head Start. It provides treatment and referrals related to the physical, mental, and dental health needs of participating families. Efforts were made to ensure that immunizations, vision and hearing screenings, fluoride treatments, and other health services were provided on a timely basis.
- **Providing services to support and enhance family development:** The most important conduits of services to families are the Family Advocates based at each Transition school site. Family Advocates each work intensively with about 40 families, making home visits, providing parent training, and offering referrals for services and educational programs.
- **Promoting parents' involvement in their children's education, both at home and at school:** The parent involvement component is comprised of efforts to increase effective bilingual communication and a variety of activities to attract parents to the school and involve them in the education of their children.

Summary of Results

Multiple data sources indicate that all components of the Transition Project were implemented as required in 1995-96, and that parents and educators had high levels of satisfaction with all four areas of service. Results from local measures also show that systemic changes have taken root at both the Head Start programs and the public schools. Much of the national core data, however, does not show overall significant

differences between Transition and Comparison groups in terms of cognitive, social, attitudinal, or health gains. Results are summarized by component as follows:

Children and Transition

On the standardized tests of achievement, no significant differences occurred between groups in either cohort when the effects of English as a Second Language were statistically controlled. Cohort 2 teachers rated their Transition students higher than Comparison students in physical development, language development, and logical thinking.

On attitude surveys, Cohort 1 Attrition students reported greater difficulty getting along with other children at school than did Transition students. All other responses from groups in both cohorts showed no significant differences.

On interview questions regarding child health, parents in both cohorts and all treatment groups generally gave positive reports. No significant differences between groups appeared.

Confounding Variables

Three known confounding variables may affect the above results: high attrition rates, variations in English proficiency among students, and the existence in Comparison schools of Transition-like services. Each may call into question the reliability of data, as follows: Attrition shrinks sample size. Overall, only 42 percent of Cohort 1 students and 58 percent of Cohort 2 students remained in their original treatment groups by Spring 1996 due to attrition. Generalizations based on data from these remaining participants are questionable.

Differences in English proficiency can affect test scores on English-language-only instruments. In Spring 1996, Cohort 1's Transition group had 41 percent Spanish-speaking students, while the Comparison group had only 26 percent and the Attrition group had 20 percent. Cohort 2's Transition group had 41 percent Spanish-speaking students, while the Comparison and Attrition groups each contained only 30 percent. Because most tests were available only in English, teachers were asked to identify students for whom English-only tests would not be appropriate. However, English proficiency varied so widely among students that the effect of language proficiency on test scores cannot be determined.

Service cross-overs in the natural school setting means there is no true control group against which to measure outcomes. Several Transition-type services were found to be offered to Comparison group families either by the Comparison schools themselves, or through Head Start services the families received for their other children. In addition, state educational trends and initiatives have promoted to all public schools a number of Transition-like services, such as developmentally appropriate practices in the classroom and procedures to smooth transitions between grades and between Head Start and public schools. The influences of all of these service cross-overs cannot be isolated and measured.

Families and Transition

The families of children enrolled in Transition classrooms received a broad array of services through the Project. Parents view the Family Advocate as the central component of the Transition Project, and the majority of parents said they were satisfied with the level of services they received.

In terms of economic stability for Cohort 1, differences between groups appear to be minimal. Most families reported adequate resources for basic necessities, but a small percentage reported deficiencies in the following areas: money required to buy necessities, access to medical/dental care, and dependable transportation.

Overall, Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 families reported similar levels of participation in public assistance programs. For three programs, however, Transition families showed significantly higher enrollment, perhaps due to effective program linking by Family Advocates or greater need of Transition families. In general, all groups showed dramatic decreases in public assistance since entry into the Project, possible evidence of increased overall self-sufficiency.

On surveys regarding family involvement in education, the vast majority of parents from all groups reported positive interactions and involvement with their schools. Most parents also reported ample opportunities to participate in the schools, but more than one-third said that outside factors prevented their participation. Parents from all groups also reported positive involvement in home education activities, with

most reporting they engaged their children in play, reading, story-telling, and discussion three to seven times a week. Most families said they had rules about television and video viewing, but groups differed in how much time they allowed their children to watch.

The System and Transition

The overarching goal of the Transition Project is to develop collaborative strategies that facilitate a smooth transition of Head Start children and their families into the public school while continuing to provide comprehensive services for them. Three hypotheses were developed on the basis of that goal: 1) Transition classrooms would be more developmentally appropriate than Comparison classrooms; 2) Transition strategies would involve collaboration of staff from both the public schools and Head Start; and 3) services for children and families would be more accessible, coordinated, and comprehensive. The data for Year Four indicate that the Transition Project has been successful in producing these kinds of systemic changes.

On surveys regarding DAP implementation, Transition teachers gave high ratings to their classrooms on most DAP components. Their lowest ratings were for staffing ratios, a component that has received some of the lowest ratings over the life of the Project. In classroom observations of DAP, Transition classrooms received significantly higher scores than Comparison classrooms on three of six assessment domains: 1) availability of learning materials, 2) learning environment, and 3) curriculum. These results provide strong evidence that Transition activities have had observable benefits in terms of classroom practice.

On surveys regarding implementation of Transition services, teachers and Family Advocates gave overall high ratings, indicating that Transition services were in place. On several items, their ratings were nearly identical.

On surveys assessing collaboration during the 1995-1996 year, however, key participants (teachers, Family Advocates, and school administrators) gave only slightly above-average ratings. This suggests they were not convinced that collaborative practices have been completely successful thus far.

In focus group discussions with representatives of key Project stakeholders (parents, teachers, Family Advocates), all groups praised the central role of the Family Advocates, the effectiveness of home visits in ensuring service delivery and improving parent-Family Advocate-teacher relations, and the resulting rise in parent involvement. Many focus group participants gave the Transition Project credit for improving health services for children and families and for sensitizing teachers and school administrators to bilingual needs and other cross-cultural issues.

Teacher focus groups also credited the Transition Project with improving communication between Head Start and public school staffs, a situation that eased student transition from preschool into kindergarten and beyond. Focus group participants widely regarded the Head Start Transition Project manager as the linchpin of this positive connection. Teachers noted, however, that room still existed for further improvement in the Head Start-public school collaboration.

The majority of focus group participants said they were optimistic about the institutionalization of Transition practices and policies. Although many expressed concern regarding the loss of funding and other support after the Project ends, participants expressed a determination to find ways for preserving no-cost elements of the program.

Conclusions

Findings from the qualitative data for the fourth year of the study confirm the Transition Project's continuing positive impact on teachers, schools, and the Head Start agency. Collaboration, while not perfect, is seen as a shared value among stakeholders, and it is viewed as something that works for the benefit of children and families. The Transition services offered, especially those of the Family Advocate, are viewed as crucial in attaining smooth transitions for children and families. The efforts to implement and nurture developmentally appropriate practice in the primary grades have resulted in observable differences between Transition and Comparison classrooms, and Transition teachers believe this component will survive well beyond the end of the Project. All participants cited ways in which the Transition Project benefits them, whether through direct services, referrals and

support of families by the Family Advocate, or the learning and linking of two separate systems for a common purpose.

In contrast to the qualitative data, the quantitative data collected by standardized instruments for the National Core Data Set, show few significant differences between Transition groups and Comparison groups for Year Four. A number of factors may (alone or in combination) explain why this is so:

- The hypothesis that Transition Project services will produce measurable positive outcomes for children and families may not be supported.
- The instruments used to evaluate results may not accurately measure desired Project outcomes; specifically, standardized achievement measures may not be appropriate to capture the impacts of DAP approaches to early childhood education or accurately assess skills of children with limited English proficiency.
- Differences between groups may not emerge until grade four or later because all Head Start alumni, such as the Comparison students, may carry their Head Start influences through grade three even without continued services.
- Transition intervention may require more than four years to produce desired outcomes.
- The additional services provided by the Transition Project may not go far enough beyond practices at Comparison schools to produce a measurable effect.
- For some families, the extent and intensity of existing social services—which the Transition Project relied upon heavily for referrals and linkages—may not be adequate to effect positive changes.

Promising Practices

Family Advocates increase parent involvement in the school by providing language assistance to Spanish-speaking families. Teachers in Transition classrooms report that having a translator available to the classroom–usually the Family Advocate--increases parent involvement in school activities.

Family Advocates increase two-way communication between parents and teachers and improve multi-cultural understanding. Parents, some of whom said their own educational experiences had not been positive, related that Family Advocates gave them new perspectives on school and the importance of parental participation. In addition, the direct services and links to community resources the Advocates provided helped families meet their needs and redirect time and energy to support childrens' learning. Teachers also noted that they could work more effectively with pupils when they had information about what was going on at home. Both school staff and parents praised the Family Advocates for increaasing awareness of and sensitivity to Hispanic cultures.

Focus on helping staff implement Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) in the classroom generates positive teacher support and produces significant changes in classroom practice. Early childhood experts agree that DAP is the best approach to meet the needs of young children, a view shared by Transition Project management. By sharing knowledge about DAP, encouraging teachers to implement DAP strategies, and connecting teachers to training opportunities and current literature on DAP, the Project management ensured that DAP was implemented to the extent possible.

Challenges

Administrative activities performed by Family Advocates diminish the time available for direct services to families. Focus group data and evaluator observations indicate that Family Advocates spend an inordinate amount of time on non-service related activities such as paperwork and meetings. While documentation and staff communication are important, they compete with the needs of families and children–the targets of this program. Efforts should be made to streamline Family Advocates' administrative duties and minimize other demands on their time.

Emphasis on understanding Hispanic cultures may overshadow other cultures in the schools. Some parents in Transition schools have expressed a desire for a focus on other cultures as well as Hispanic cultures. While Hispanic families may predominate, many other cultural groups are represented in the schools.

Recommendations for the Collaboration

Institutionalize low and no-cost components of the Transition Project. Focus group results reveal broad support for many low and no-cost Transition components, such as developmentally appropriate practice in the classroom, joint planning, and parent activities. These components should be incorporated into the policies of Transition partners without delay. Further discussion should also explore service gaps and coverages, leading to a consensus on the elements of the Transition Project that provide the most value. This strategy will ensure the sustainability of Transition goals over time.

Create a central forum to encourage the sharing of planning information, program experiences, and strategic solutions. Many valuable lessons have been learned regarding how to transition students, encourage parent involvement, and provide comprehensive family services. These lessons could be lost without a formal effort to document and share them. Documentation and sharing could be accomplished by means of staff in-services led by Transition teachers and Head Start personnel, a readily accessible file system of plans and ideas, and Internet-based searchable pages.

Look for alternative funding sources for continuing Family Advocate services. Most evaluation results have spotlighted the crucial role that Family Advocates play in delivering Transition Project services. Nearly all participants have expressed concern about the departure of the Family Advocates at the termination of the program. School and district administrators should explore alternative funding sources, such as grants, direct assistance from agencies (*e.g.*, Vista or Americorp), or collaboration with other agencies to provide Family Advocate-type services.

Transition Project leaders should reexamine the strategies Family Advocates utilize for working with "difficult" families. While Family Advocates have been praised for their assistance to many families, they have not effectively reached all families. Often, the hardest-to-reach families have the greatest need. A closer look at the skills and strategies that Family Advocates bring to their outreach efforts may point out areas where further training can improve their success.

Recommendations for the Evaluation

Explore more fully the variables that appear to mitigate results. Attrition, duration of treatment, and English language proficiency all affect outcomes of the Transition Project. Each should be studied to determine its effect. Do Attrition students differ in important ways from Transition or Comparison students? Does "time in treatment" as an indicator reveal significant trends when results are analyzed longitudinally? What are the full impacts of English language proficiency on school success, and do school policies toward language acquisition have any effect? Further analysis along these lines may provide valuable insights.

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CHAPTER

1 INTRODUCTION

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Arizona Head Start—Public School Transition Project completed its fourth year of program implementation at the conclusion of the 1995-96 school year. One of 31 demonstration projects in the United States, this program is part of a national study designed to test whether advances by Head Start children in their cognitive skills, social-emotional development, and family stability can be maintained by continuing Head Start-type services into kindergarten through third grade. The Project is also intended to identify, develop, and implement "Transition" practices that can effectively bridge the gaps between the Head Start Program and public schools, and from grade to grade.

The conclusion of the 1995-96 school year saw the Project reach a milestone. It marked the "graduation" of the first cohort of children from the third grade—and from the Project. At the end of the 1996-97 school year, when the second and final cohort finishes third grade, longitudinal analysis of the five-year project will be possible.

The Arizona Head Start—Public School Transition Project involves classes at six schools in three different school districts in the city of Phoenix. Within each district, schools were randomly assigned to Transition or Comparison groups. The three schools designated "Transition schools" are Crockett in Balsz District, Machan in Creighton District, and Encanto in Osborn District. Selected students at these schools receive comprehensive Transition services. The three other schools serve as Comparison schools for the project: Balsz in the Balsz District, Papago in Creighton District, and Longview in Osborn District. Directing the Project is Southwest Human Development, a social service agency that operates 27 Head Start preschool classrooms in central Phoenix. To evaluate the program as required in its grant, Southwest subcontracted with the Morrison Institute for Public Policy, School of Public Affairs, at Arizona State University.

Results of the project's first year of implementation, during which Cohort 1 attended kindergarten, were reported in *Head Start Goes to School, 1992-93 Evaluation Report* (Greene, Mulholland, and Shaw). Results from the second year of implementation, during which Cohort 1 students were in first grade and a second group of students—Cohort 2—were in kindergarten, were reported in *Head Start Goes to School, 1993-94 Evaluation Report* (Greene, Mulholland, and Ahern). Results for the third year were reported in two formats: 1) a report focused on child results for the Phoenix Project as a whole (*A Report on Child Outcomes for the Arizona Head Start—Public School Transition Project, 1994-95*, Stafford and Greene), and 2) a set of three case studies—one for each Transition school—that examined individual school variations in curriculum, pedagogical approach, array of services, and other characteristics (*A Case Study of Crockett Elementary School and the Arizona Head Start—Public School Transition Project; A Case Study of Encanto Elementary School...; A Case Study of W. T. Machan Elementary School ...*; Greene, 1995). These narratives contain detailed information and preliminary findings for the first three years of the program's implementation. The current report, *Head Start Goes to School, 1995-96*, like the first two evaluation accounts, focuses on treatment groups across sites, and describes outcomes as of the close of the school year.

Sustaining the Continuum: Research on the Transition from Preschool to Elementary School

Initial planning for the Arizona Head Start—Public School Transition Project took place at a time of broadening consensus among experts that the educational and developmental needs of children would be better met by smoothing the transition from preschool to public school and by making early rather than later interventions. Today, many experts agree that the early childhood years should be treated as a continuum, and that early programs and services should be sustained with the consistent participation of parents, teachers, and community members.

Such program continuity would allow the families of young school-age children to focus on nurturing and strengthening their relationships rather than on repeatedly adapting to new educational and service systems. The "guiding principles" for continuous effective interventions include high quality, comprehensiveness (both of services and of family involvement), and extension over time: i.e., "...the view that development is a continuous process." (Zigler & Styfco, pp. 147-149).

The Letter of the Law

In 1994, the U.S. Congress re-authorized both the Head Start Act and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), reinforcing support for the Transition concept of early childhood education. In July 1996, the Administration on Children, Youth, and Families of the US Department of Health and Human Services announced that an additional $35 million would be made available to Head Start grantees as increases beyond their ongoing Head Start grants, beginning with programs re-funded on July 1, 1996 and continuing with monthly re-funding through June 1, 1997 (ACYF-PF-HS 96-14, July 31, 1996). In November, the first comprehensive revision in 20 years of Head Start performance standards was published (ACYF-IM-HS 96-23). In some respects the new standards were stricter, for example cutting the time period in half for completing screenings of each child's developmental, sensory, and behavioral levels. In other cases the new standards bowed to local laws, for example deferring to state or municipal standards regarding tuberculosis screenings for volunteer Head Start workers.

The most recent national-level government pronouncements bode well for the Transition concept and other innovative educational programs. President Clinton, in his State of the Union address of January 1997, announced that improving the nation's educational system would be the central theme of his second administration. Mentioning the Head Start Program by name, he set explicit goals for the year 2000, stating that every child should read by the age of eight and have access to the Internet by age 12. Political commentators speculated that the President would have little problem achieving Congressional consensus on these goals.

On the state level, Arizona has demonstrated its own commitment to Transition practices. In March 1996, the Arizona Head Start Collaboration Project was initiated by the Arizona State Head Start Association, a representative body composed of Head Start directors and parents from Southwest Human Development and six other regional Head Start grantees in the state. Under the Arizona Governor's Division for Children, the Head Start Collaboration Project, which was made possible with funding from the US Department of Health and Human Services, has created a formal partnership of state government agencies, Head Start programs, and other interested parties as an infrastructure for coordinating policy, planning, and service delivery in the areas of health, child care, welfare, education, national service, literacy, and activities related to children with disabilities.

Recently-enacted welfare reform legislation on both the national and state levels, however, may impact services to vulnerable families. The "Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996" (PL 104-193) ended federal guarantees of assistance to the poor and created capped block grants to states called Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) (Burkholder, 1997). Arizona's EMPOWER (Employing and Moving people Off Welfare and Encouraging Responsibility) Program, which took effect in November 1995 and runs through 2002, is less restrictive than TANF in certain respects, but it remains unclear to what extent it will be affected by the new federal legislation. A Block Grant Committee has been established

in the state House of Representatives to explore how much flexibility is permitted individual states under the TANF block grant and also to shape policies and legislation.

Components of the Transition Project

The Transition concept is supported by four "pillars" of comprehensive family-centered services: education, health, family development, and parent involvement. Some of these services were offered as a matter of policy at Transition and Comparison schools prior to the Transition project. In any case, services addressing all four components are provided at all three Transition schools, with certain variations dictated by the needs and preferences of individual schools. Examples for each component follow.

Promoting and supporting *education* practices, curriculum, and materials that are developmentally appropriate (DAP).

This pillar supports Transition teachers in their work to institute "developmentally appropriate practices" (DAP), which are defined by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) as "more active learning approaches based on a broader interpretation of children's educational needs and abilities rather than undue emphasis on rote learning and whole-group instruction of narrowly-defined academic skills" (Bredecamp and Copple, eds., 1997). Among the strategies used to promote DAP are the development of individual education plans for each child, the use of related classroom materials, and the opportunity for teachers to engage in intensive professional development.

The three Transition schools addressed this component in a number of ways. Encanto, for example, provided well-organized DAP trainings for teachers and a wide variety of literature and other materials, while also placing special emphasis on arranging teacher visits to other multi-age and bilingual classrooms and classes that use portfolios and other developmentally appropriate approaches. Machan held workshops and seminars on bilingual literacy, problem-solving, work sampling, and the project approach, and also made funds available for the purchase of computers, furniture, and other equipment and supplies. Crockett also offered workshops, the assistance of consultants in classrooms, and time off for teachers to visit other classes. Some Crockett teachers began the practice of "looping," which keeps them with the same class of students for two consecutive years.

Providing—or linking children and families with—needed *physical health*, *mental health*, and *dental* services.

The health delivery system for the Transition project is modeled after that used by Southwest Head Start. It offers treatment and referrals related to physical, mental, and dental health needs of participating families. As the pool of recipients has grown over time, all three Transition schools have worked to make this component more comprehensive and timely. Among the steps taken were increased efforts to ensure that immunizations, vision and hearing screenings, fluoride treatments, and other health services were provided on a timely basis.

Providing services to support and enhance *family development.*

The most important conduits of services to families are the Family Advocates based at each Transition school site. Family Advocates each work intensively with about 40 families, making home visits, providing parent training, and offering referrals for services and educational programs. As the Transition Project moved into its middle years and the parameters of its family service mission were repeatedly stretched and redefined, each Advocate's flexibility and creativity was continually challenged. Among other things, Advocates often represented a bridge between cultures, perhaps serving as translators, enrolling family members in ESL classes or encouraging classroom teachers to learn rudimentary Spanish or enlist Spanish-speaking aides.

Clearly, personnel turnover among Family Advocates could possibly threaten service continuity to families. Recognizing this issue, program management has concentrated on training and other means to diminish the negative effects of inevitable personnel changes.

Promoting *parent involvement* in their children's education, both at home and at school.

The parent involvement component continued to receive great attention. It included efforts to increase effective bilingual communication and a variety of activities to attract parents to the school and involve them in the education of their children. At Machan School, for example, a Thanksgiving potluck meal was scheduled to be held each year at lunchtime in order to allow working parents to share the meal with their children. Parents at each Transition school received information about specific ways they could enhance their children's learning.

CHAPTER

2 METHODS

EVALUATION DESIGN

The Transition evaluation is a quasi-experimental study relying on two categories of data collection and analysis: 1) the "National Core Data Set" that is included in the national Head Start-Transition study, and 2) data on other matters of specific interest to the Arizona Project. These data, both quantitative and qualitative, are intended to determine the effects of Transition services by comparing attributes of Transition children and families with a group of former Head Start children and families who do not receive Transition services.

While the national data set primarily gathers quantitative information about children and families, the local data set focuses on systemic change, institutional and policy outcomes, and other impacts on the schools and on the Head Start program. The local evaluation design is presented in Appendix A.

INSTRUMENTS AND DATA COLLECTION

Six cycles of data collection were completed as of the end of the 1995-96 school year. Originally, baseline data were collected for each cohort in the fall of its kindergarten year. Thereafter, data were gathered each Spring as the cohort progressed through their grades.

It should be noted that the current report does not profile all of the results generated by each instrument administered for the national data set, since some are not relevant to local questions. Descriptions of each of the instruments for which data are reported appear in Appendix B. The data that are presented in this report are enumerated in Table 2.1 and described below:

- For both cohorts, family outcome results from 1995-96 are reported, as well as child achievement and attitude data collected in Spring 1995 and Spring 1996. The latter were entered and analyzed locally for this report.
- All data collected in the Spring of 1996 for the local data set are included in this report, including information for each cohort and data for the project as a whole.

All participants in the Transition Project were sources of data: children, families, teachers, Family Advocates, and principals. National core data and teacher ratings of students were collected from participants in both Transition and Comparison groups. Other local data related exclusively to the implementation of the Transition Project and were collected only from Transition school participants.

CHILD TESTING

Child assessments were administered to children individually in school settings outside the classroom. They were conducted by examiners trained specifically in their use. Children whose primary language is English were tested with each of the English-language achievement instruments. Children whose primary language is Spanish were given only the TVIP and the PPVT until they were deemed ready by their teachers to take the Woodcock-Johnson tests. The Spanish-language tests were administered by a bilingual examiner.

Six instruments were used to measure cognitive development: the *Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-Revised* (PPVT-R); the Spanish language adaptation of the PPVT-R, the *Test De Vocabulario en Imagenes Peabody* (TVIP); and four subtests of the *Woodcock-Johnson Achievement Tests-Revised* (WJ-22, letter-word

recognition; WJ-23, passage comprehension; WJ-24, calculation; WJ-25, problem solving). In 1996, the Project design called for administration of the PPVT-R and TVIP only to Cohort 1 students. Accordingly the TVIP was administered only to nine Cohort 1 students in Spring of 1996, and the number in each group was too small for separate analyses. Student attitudes toward school were measured by the *What I Think of School* measure.

Family Interviews

Interviewers who conducted family interviews had been trained by a member of the evaluation team previously taught by the National Research Coordinating Team. Spanish-speaking parents were interviewed using the Spanish-language version of the interview, and bilingual parents were given the choice of Spanish or English.

All interviews were conducted at a time and place convenient to the family. Most parents preferred to be interviewed in their homes. Interviewers used

Table 2.1

1995-96 DATA SETS ANALYZED FOR COHORTS 1 AND 2

DATA SET	COHORTS 1			COHORTS 2		
Child Data						
• Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-Revised (PPVT-R) *-N-*	Spg 95	→	Spg 96			
• Test de Vocabulario en Imagenes Peabody (TVIP) *-N-*			Spg 96			
• Woodcock/Johnson-Revised, subtests 22,23,24,25 *-N-*	Spg 95	→	Spg 96	Spg 95	→	Spg 96
• Teacher Rating of Students *-L-*			Spg 96	Spg 95	→	Spg 96
• What I Think of School *-N-*		Spg 96				Spg 96
• Social Skills Rating System *-N-*		Spg 96				
• Child Health *-N-*		Spg 96				Spg 96
• Writing Samples *-N-*		Spg 96				Spg 96
Family Data						
• Family Involvement in Children's Learning *-N-*		Spg 96				
• Parenting Dimensions Inventory *-N-*		Spg 96				
• Family Resource Scale *-N-*		Spg 96				
• Family Routines (select items) *-N-*						
• Local Family Interview Questions *-L-*		Spg 96			Spg 96	
• End-of-Year Summary of Family Services *-L-*		Spg 96			Spg 96	
• Family School Climate Survey *-N-*		Spg 96			Spg 96	
System Data						
• Assessment Profile for Early Childhood Programs *-N-*		Spg 96			Spg 96	
• ADAPT *-N-*		Spg 96			Spg 96	
• Innovation Component Checklists for Transition *-L-*		Spg 96			Spg 96	
• Innovation Component Checklist for DAP *-L-*		Spg 96			Spg 96	
• Focus Groups *-L-*		Spg 96			Spg 96	
• Interviews with comparison school principals *-L-*		Spg 96			Spg 96	
• Observation/documentation of program activities *-L-*		ongoing			ongoing	
• Survey of Collaboration *-L-*		Spg 96			Spg 96	

N = Instrument is part of the National Core Data Set
L = Instrument was developed for the local evaluation

machine-scannable interview booklets included in the National Core Data Set. Parents who agreed to be interviewed received a $20 money order and a note of thanks. The interviews typically took 45 to 60 minutes to complete.

In some cases, families were not interviewed either because they declined, repeatedly canceled or failed to keep interview appointments, or could not be reached after repeated attempts at contact. Thus, there exists the possibility that interview data could be skewed by the "self-selection" of cooperating families.

Surveys

All the surveys in the National Core Data Set as well as several local surveys were administered in the Spring of 1996. They were completed by principals, teachers, and Family Advocates. Packages containing the survey instruments, instructions, and return envelopes were mailed out in April 1996, with the request that they be returned within one month. Surveys not returned by that time were solicited by follow-up phone calls and/or personal notes.

Classroom Observations

Observations were made in the classrooms of 30 participating teachers in April 1996. They were conducted by a trained member of the evaluation team using the national instrument, *Assessment Profile for Early Childhood Programs,* which was supplemented by *A Developmentally Appropriate Practice Template (ADAPT).* All observations were scheduled at the individual teacher's convenience.

Interviews and Observations

Focus group meetings were held in the Spring of 1996 to elicit qualitative information regarding the perspectives of various stakeholders in the Transition Project. The focus group methodology described by Stewart and Shamdasani (1990) was used in recruiting participants, designing questions, conducting the dialogue, and analyzing the resulting data. A member of the evaluation team acted as facilitator for the sessions, which lasted about two hours and were audiotaped for later transcription. Interview protocols in 1996 were based upon an earlier version developed by the evaluator with input from members of the Transition management team. Sessions were held with the following groups:

- Spanish-speaking and English-speaking parents of children enrolled in Transition classrooms from both cohorts and all three Transition schools
- Transition school teachers from Transition schools
- Transition Family Advocates and Head Start Family Advocates from all the schools
- Principals of the three Transition schools, interviewed individually

The principals of the three Comparison schools were interviewed in May and June of 1996. A member of the evaluation team met with each principal to document which programs and services already in place at the Comparison schools most closely resembled the services offered by the Transition Project. Interview questions covered family services, health services, parent involvement, and teacher training in developmentally appropriate practice.

The lead evaluator attended key Transition Project meetings and events during 1995 and early 1996, usually in the role of a participant/observer; another member of the evaluation team participated in late Spring 1996. These evaluators attended all monthly Transition Team meetings at the three schools and the monthly Transition Governing Board meetings, and participated in Transition Management meetings with Southwest Head Start managers approximately every six weeks. The evaluator also attended a variety of professional development workshops and conferences. Minutes of all meetings and notes taken by the evaluator/observer were logged and analyzed as part of the qualitative data set. Also, to document services to families in the Project, a review of the Family Advocate end-of-year summary sheets was conducted.

Participants

Participants, for the purpose of this study, are former Head Start children (and their families) who, in Fall 1992 or Fall 1993, enrolled in one of the three Transition schools or one of the three Comparison schools for their kindergarten year. Participants, therefore, include both those who receive Project services

(Transition school participants), and those who do not (Comparison school participants). Furthermore, as teachers receive Project services, they also are also considered participants. Participant numbers as of Spring 1996 are shown in Table 2.2.

Cohort 1 participant families were described demographically in the 1992-93 report on the Transition project, and Cohort 2 participants were described in the 1993-94 report. Unlike Cohort 1, in which the original Transition and Comparison families showed nearly identical demographic profiles, Cohort 2 groups showed major differences. In contrast with the Comparison group, the Transition group included more than twice as many Hispanic families (82 percent); was twice as likely to speak Spanish at home; included more respondents born outside the United States (mostly in Mexico); was more mobile; and had a lower median annual household income.

Table 2.2

Transition Study Participants in Their Original Treatment Condition as of Spring 1996

	Children & Families	Teachers
Cohort 1		
Transition	28	8*
Control	23	13
TOTALS	51	21
Cohort 2		
Transition	41	8*
Control	33	14
TOTALS	74	22

**Three multi-age teachers have students in both cohorts, but are counted only in Cohort 1*

Limitations of the Study

As was noted in the 1993-94 evaluation report, the results of this study must be qualified by limitations inherent in the research design. The difficulties of conducting longitudinal research in natural school settings unavoidably are compounded over time as the study progresses. For example, it is virtually impossible to isolate "the treatment" and its effects on the cohort groups because programs and activities offered by the Comparison schools (see Table at the end of this chapter: "Comparison School Practices and Services") often mimic some of the Transition services.

Attrition

The mobility of study participants was apparent in the initial family demographic data. Of all Cohort 1 families and Cohort 2 Transition families, less than half reported residing at their current residence for two years or more. Over a third of Cohort 2 Comparison families had also moved within the two years preceeding the study. A number of strategies were developed to minimize the effects of attrition on evaluation outcomes, including regular contact with participating families, staff time dedicated to Attrition group families, and reimbursement of families for costs incurred in the interview process. In addition, a database was set up in the second year of the study to track students who left participating schools.

In the context of this evaluation, the Attrition group includes all children (and families) not in their original treatment condition. Total participants and attrition rates are presented below.

Cohort 1

Fall 1992	119
Spring 1996	51
% remaining	57.1%
% of attrited families for which data were collected in 1996	58.8%

Corhort 2

Fall 1993	128
Spring 1996	74
% remaining	42.2%
% of attrited families for which data were collected in 1996	57.4%

Figure 2.1. Comparison School Practices and Services

Program or Service	Balsz School	Longview School	Papago School
Education Programs	• Head Start preschool on-site • 1 part-time school psychologist • 1 full-time counselor • Meet-The-Teacher Night each Fall • Carousel of Creativity	• Head Start preschool on-site • 1 full-time school psychologist • 2 full-time counselors (1 is bilingual) • Early Childhood Coordinating Committee works on transition activities • Kindergarten Round-Up • Family Night • School tours for Head Start children • Work Sampling portfolio exchange between Head Start and kindergarten teachers	• Head Start preschool on-site • At-risk preschool • 1 full-time school psychologist • 4-year state restructuring grant with focus on DAP • CLIP reading tutoring • Curriculum Night • bi-monthly school newsletter
Social Services	• 1 social service worker1 day per week • Sexual assault education program • DES-sponsored before/after school care • ESL/GED classes twice weekly on campus	• 1 full-time social worker • 1 A.S.U. social work intern (2 days/ week) • Hispanic & Native American parent liaisons/ home visits • Native American Center • ESL classes at school • Parent support groups	• 1 full-time social worker • 1 community service worker • numerous collaborative relationships with local agencies • ESL classes on campus • GED classes available through high school district
Health Services	• 1 full-time school nurse • Health Safari Van visits periodically • referrals for glasses, immunizations, other health services	• School-based health clinic run by St. Joseph's Hospital provides primary care to students who qualify • 1 full-time school nurse • 1 full-time health aide (LPN) • 1 nurse practitioner (daily visits) • transportaion and assistance with medical visits	• 1 full-time school nurse • referral sources for orthopedic services, glasses, and braces • dental screenings every other year through mobile dental unit
Parent Involvement	• Booster Club • parent representatives on School Articulation Committee • bi-annual Parent-Teacher Conferences • Reading is Fundamental program for parents and first grade children	• PTA • Native American Parent Group • Bi-annual Parent-Teacher conferences • monthly Kindergarten Family Nights • planning site-based management team	• PTA • Site-Based Management Team • Participatory Management Team • Bi-annual Parent-Teacher conferences • 2-year federal grant for increasing parent involvement • Homework Hotline • weekly student academic checklist sent with each child • parenting workshops on campus • parent component of CLIP tutoring program
Partnerships	• Phoenix Police Officer on campus daily (Project D.A.R.E.) • Phoenix Fire Dept. Urban Safety Program weekly visits • Motorola partnership provides speakers and sponsors Whiz Kids reading program	• Denny's, Sizzler award dinners for parent volunteers • West Side Food Bank vouchers • Bar S Corporation partnership provides tutors, gives employment preference to Longview parents, pays rent on condo for 1 family • Parenting classes through Parents Annonymous • grant application for coordination of community services	• collaborative relationships with: Phoenix Fire Department Phoenix Police Department Project D.A.R.E. Jewish Family Center Job Search Friendly House American Cancer Society Pilot Parents

CHAPTER

3 CHILD SERVICES AND OUTCOMES

This chapter summarizes the educational services provided to children in Transition classrooms and presents results related to child outcomes for both cohorts.

CHILD SERVICES

The educational services provided to children in Transition classrooms include a developmentally appropriate curriculum, a quality learning environment, and specific instructional methods. Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) draws upon cognitive development theory recognizing that children develop at different rates. It regards learning as an interactive, creative process and defines knowledge as a construction involving the learner with the content (Elkind, 1989).

A developmentally appropriate approach to instruction addresses the social-emotional and physical domains, as well as the cognitive domains, of child development. In DAP classrooms, teachers provide guidance and assistance as students construct their own meaning through varied learning experiences. This evaluation study postulates that children in Transition classrooms will register more positive outcomes by academic, social, and attitudinal measures than their counterparts in less developmentally appropriate Comparison classrooms.

In addition, physical, mental and dental health services are provided, both directly and indirectly, to children in the Transition Project. Child health outcomes as reported by parents for both cohorts are described in this section.

CHILDREN

In this portion of the report "Transition" and "Comparison" groups generally refer only to those children and families who have remained in their original treatment condition since the beginning of the study.

Some children from each group in both cohorts moved to schools outside the study. As many as possible of these children were located and tested, and the results were placed in a separate treatment category referred to as the "Attrition group." A total of 62 Attrition group children from both cohorts were tracked to their new schools during the 1995-96 school year.

The numbers of Transition, Comparison, and Attrition group

Table 3.1

Cohort 1 Students Who Were Tested in Spring 1995 and Spring 1996

	Spring 1995 Number	Spring 1996 Number
Transition	34	28
Comparison	26	23
Attrition	8[a]	35[b]

[a] This number represents 14% of the total Attrition group in 1995.
[b] This number represents 53% of the total Attrition group in 1996.

Table 3.2

Cohort 2 Students Who Were Tested in Spring 1995 and Spring 1996

	Spring 1995 Number	Spring 1996 Number
Transition	38	41
Comparison	42	33
Attrition	15[a]	27[b]

[a] This number represents 35% of the total Attrition group in 1995.
[b] This number represents 55% of the total Attrition group in 1996.

children tested in Spring 1995 and Spring 1996 are shown in Tables 3.1 and 3.2. In Spring 1995, the attrition rate for Cohort 1 was 49 percent; it rose to 56 percent in 1996. The attrition rate for Cohort 2 increased from 35 percent in 1995 to 40 percent in 1996.

Because transience may affect a child's achievement and adjustment (Benson, Haycraft, Steyaert, & Weigel, 1979; Shaller, 1974), Attrition group children are presented as a third treatment group when displaying the analysis of Spring 1995 and Spring 1996 data for both Cohorts.

Research indicates that achievement is typically affected when the attendance rate for a student is low (Ohlund & Ericsson, 1994). In Table 3.3, absences are listed for Transition and Comparison groups for both cohorts. (Attendance information for Attrition group students was not available.) Chi-square analyses of the 1996 attendance data indicate no significant differences between treatment groups for either cohort. Therefore, no need is indicated for further achievement analysis using school absences as a covariate.

Primary language is considered to be the first language a child learns. Research (Lindholm, 1991) has shown that limited English proficiency affects achievement test scores. For the purposes of this evaluation, any child who was administered the TVIP at any time during the project is designated as Spanish speaking. For the purpose of testing, however, the decision to use Spanish or English was based on teacher ratings of a child's proficiency in each language. Table 3.4 summarizes the number of Spanish and English speakers within each treatment group for both cohorts.

Child Outcomes

Child outcomes were measured for cognitive development, attitudes toward school and health. For both cohorts analyses of variance (ANOVA) were used to examine differences in 1995 and 1996 test score results. These analyses were also used to investigate mean gain score differences between Spring 1995 and Spring 1996 among Transition, Comparison, and Attrition groups. The Tukey's honestly significant difference t-test procedure was employed to investigate which groups differed significantly. In addition, all Woodcock-Johnson subtests and PPVT-R results were compared for the three treatment groups in each cohort using primary

Table 3.3

Days Absent by Cohort and Treatment

	Cohort 1		Cohort 2	
	Transition	Comparison	Transition	Comparison
No missing days	1	5	5	0
1 to 5 days missed	11	10	12	15
6 to 10 days missed	9	4	14	5
11 to 20 days missed	6	1	7	8
21 or more days missed	1	2	2	2
Total who missed some school	27	17	35	30

Table 3.4

Number of Spanish and English Speakers

Primary Language	Cohort 1			Cohort 2		
	Transition	Comparison	Attrition	Transition	Comparison	Attrition
Spanish	10	6	7	17	10	8
English	18	17	28	24	23	19

Table 3.5

Mean Raw Test and Gain Scores by Treatment—Cohort 1

Test	Group	Sample Size: 1995/1996/Gain	Spring 1995	Spring 1996	Mean Gain 1995-96
WJ-22 (letter word recognition)	Transition	35 / 28 / 26	27.57[b]	32.79[a]	6.12
	Comparison	25 / 23 / 21	29.32*	33.74	4.67
	Attrition	8 / 35 / 13	22.75*	31.71	7.00
WJ-23 (passage comprehension)	Transition	35 / 28 / 26	13.83	16.25	3.58
	Comparison	25 / 23 / 21	15.72	17.00	1.48
	Attrition	8 / 35 / 13	12.13	16.11	2.00
WJ-24 (calculation)	Transition	35 / 28 / 26	10.34	16.46	6.65
	Comparison	25 / 23 / 21	11.08	16.26	5.67
	Attrition	8 / 35 / 13	8.63	15.63	5.62
WJ-25 (applied problems)	Transition	35 / 28 / 26	28.34	29.75	4.54
	Comparison	25 / 23 / 21	25.56	29.09	4.19
	Attrition	8 / 35 / 13	22.75	28.71	3.38
PPVT-R vocabulary	Transition	28	-	80.96[a]	-
	Comparison	23	-	86.52	-
	Attrition	35	-	82.09	-

*For differences between designated groups, p<.05.
[a]Significant covariate effects for language spoken exist.
[b]Significant treatment effects no longer exist when language spoken is a covariate, but there is no significant covariate effect.

language as the covariate (ANCOVA). Results for Cohort 1 for the PPVT-R and four Woodcock-Johnson subtests for both 1995 and 1996, together with mean gain scores, are presented in Table 3.5. Corresponding data for Cohort 2 are in Table 3.6. Mean score comparisons for treatment groups include scores for all children who were present for both testing sequences.

Cognitive Outcomes

Before considering effects of a child's primary language, significant group differences were observed on four Woodcock-Johnson subtests. Specifically, in 1995, the Cohort 1 Comparison group scored higher than the Attrition group on letter-word identification and the Cohort 2 Comparison group scored higher than Transition students on applied problems. In 1996, the Cohort 2 Attrition group had higher scores than the Transition group on both letter-word identification and passage comprehension.

Initially, when mean scores and mean gain scores for Cohort 2 were compared, it appeared that by Spring 1996 the Transition group consistently scored lower and tended to make fewer gains than the Comparison and Attrition groups. However, Transition students in Cohort 2, when compared with their Comparison counterparts, are more than twice as likely to have families whose dominant language is Spanish, and nearly all standardized achievement instruments were available only

Table 3.6

Mean Raw Test and Gain Scores by Treatment—Cohort 2

Test	Group	Sample Size: 1995/1996/Gain	Spring 1995	Spring 1996	Mean Gain 1995-96
WJ-22 (letter word recognition)	Transition	56 / 41 / 41	16.75[a]	23.66[b]	6.76
	Comparison	32 / 33 / 31	19.50	26.42	7.97
	Attrition	10 / 27 / 18	18.70	28.56*	9.17
WJ-23 (passage comprehension)	Transition	56 / 41 / 41	5.11[a]	10.41[b]	5.07
	Comparison	32 / 33 / 31	7.47	12.18	5.71
	Attrition	10 / 27 / 18	7.80	13.85*	5.78
WJ-24 (calculation)	Transition	56 / 41 / 41	5.84	9.49	3.61
	Comparison	32 / 33 / 31	7.06	11.09	4.29
	Attrition	10 / 27 / 18	6.80	10.63	3.61
WJ-25 (applied problems)	Transition	56 / 41 / 41	20.59[b]	25.54	4.46
	Comparison	32 / 33 / 31	22.66*	26.12	4.10
	Attrition	10 / 27 / 18	22.00	26.11	4.11

*For differences between designated groups, p<.05.
[a]Significant covariate effects for language spoken exist.
[b]Significant treatment effects no longer exist when language spoken is a covariate, but there is a significant covariate effect for language spoken.

in English. Since English comprehension was considered likely to affect test results, data were reanalyzed. For Cohort 1 significant language effects are found for two 1996 scores: the PPVT-R and the Woodcock-Johnson letter-word recognition subtest. For Cohort 2 significant covariate effects for language are found for five Woodcock-Johnson subtests: letter-word identification and passage comprehension in both 1995 and 1996, and applied problems in 1995.

Notably, when primary language is used as the covariate, all significant treatment group differences on achievement tests disappear for both cohorts. These findings indicate that differences among treatment groups are due to language rather than Transition, Comparison or Attrition group status. In other words, no evidence demonstrates that those receiving Transition services have higher or lower academic achievement than those who don't. Likewise, no evidence shows that Attrition group children are more at risk academically than Transition or Comparison group children, almost all of whom have remained in the same school since kindergarten.

Writing Samples

Using normative scoring, an independent firm evaluated Writing Samples on five criteria. Mean scores for Cohort 1 are noted in Table 3.7, and mean scores for Cohort 2 are in Table 3.8. All writing skills for children in both cohorts were found to be in the developing stages with no significant differences among treatment groups.

Attitudes Toward School

When the instrument *What I Think of School* was administered to both cohorts in Spring 1996 (Tables 3.9 and 3.10), only one significant difference was observed. On one of the eight items ("How do you get along with the other children at school?") Cohort 1 Attrition group students reported more difficulty than Transition students in getting along with other children at school. This finding is consistent with the literature (Benson, Haycraft, Steyaert, & Weigel, 1979). However, high mean scores overall for all groups on this measure indicate a tendency for students to use only positive responses.

Teacher Ratings of Students

The *Teacher Rating of Students* results are shown in Figure 3.1 for Cohort 1 and in Figure 3.2 for Cohort 2. This instrument is designed to assess eight factors related to success in the classroom. Using a scale of 1 to 4, participating teachers evaluated students in self-esteem, cooperative learning, physical development, family support, interest in literacy, language development, comfort in the school environment, and logical-scientific-mathematical thinking. Because this instrument was completed only by teachers participating in the study, no ratings were available for Attrition students. Ratings for

Table 3.7

Cohort 1 Mean Scores for Each Criterion on the Writing Sample

Criterion	Transition (n=24)	Comparison (n=19)	Attrition (n=32)
Convention	1.21	1.24	1.13
Focus	1.92	1.94	1.52
Support	1.79	1.82	1.42
Organization	1.83	1.94	1.52
Integration	1.83	1.88	1.52

Table 3.8

Cohort 2 Mean Scores for Each Criterion on the Writing Sample

Criterion	Transition (n=24)	Comparison (n=19)	Attrition (n=32)
Convention	1.00	1.04	1.14
Focus	1.38	1.56	1.45
Support	1.30	1.46	1.36
Organization	1.38	1.52	1.41
Integration	1.35	1.48	1.45

Table 3.9

What I Think of School: Average Ratings by Students

	Cohort 1: Spring 1996		
	Transition (28)	Comparison (23)	Attrition (35)
1. How much do you like school?	2.75	2.74	2.60
2. How well do you do at your school work, compared to others in your class?	2.50	2.39	2.46
3. How important is it to you to do well in school?	2.93	3.00	2.91
4. How hard do you try at school?	2.89	2.91	3.00
5. How important is it to your parents that you do well in school?	3.00	2.91	2.94
6. How do you get along with your teacher?	2.89	2.83	2.83
7. How do you get along with the other children at school?	2.79*	2.57	2.37*
8. How much does your teacher help you learn new things?	2.83	2.79	2.73
Total Average Score	**2.83**	**2.79**	**2.79**

Based on a 3-point scale with "3" being the most positive response.

* $p < .05$

Table 3.10

What I Think of School: Average Ratings by Students

	Cohort 2: Spring 1996		
	Transition (41)	Comparison (31)	Attrition (27)
1. How much do you like school?	2.73	2.90	2.67
2. How well do you do at your school work, compared to others in your class?	2.44	2.55	2.44
3. How important is it to you to do well in school?	2.85	2.84	2.81
4. How hard do you try at school?	2.88	2.84	2.70
5. How important is it to your parents that you do well in school?	2.85	3.00	2.93
6. How do you get along with your teacher?	2.90	2.81	2.85
7. How do you get along with the other children at school?	2.56	2.68	2.44
8. How much does your teacher help you learn new things?	2.83	2.97	2.93
Total Average Score	**2.76**	**2.82**	**2.72**

Based on a 3-point scale with "3" being the most positive response.

students in both Transition and Comparison schools were generally positive. Cohort 2 Transition School students scored significantly higher than Comparison students on physical development, language development, and logical thinking. There were no significant differences between groups for Cohort 1.

Child Health

As part of the Family Interview, parents were asked to rate the health of their children. Results are shown for Cohort 1 in Table 3.11 and Cohort 2 results appear in Table 3.12. Overall, parents of Transition, Comparison, and Attrition group children gave positive responses. The general health of 79% of Transition group children was rated excellent or very good, compared to 90% of Comparison group children and 88% of Attrition group children. However, one quarter of Cohort 1 Transition and Comparison group parents had concerns about their children's health or hygiene, and half of the Attrition group expressed similar concerns. While a small percentage of parents in each group felt their children's activities were curtailed due to health problems, fewer parents believed their children's school attendance was affected by health issues. No differences between groups were statistically significant.

Table 3.11

Parent Ratings of Child Health—Cohort 1: Spring 1996

	Transition (n=42)	Comparison (n=39)	Attrition (n=8)
In general, child's health is:			
Excellent/very good	79%	90%	88%
Good	19%	10%	13%
Fair/poor	2%	6%	0%
Child does not seem well rested	3%	8%	0%
Parent or teacher has concerns about child's health or hygiene	24%	28%	50%

Percents may not equal 100 due to rounding

Table 3.12

Parent Ratings of Child Health—Cohort 2: Spring 1996

	Transition (n=37)	Comparison (n=30)	Attrition (n=26)
Health keeps child from play and other activities	3%	10%	4%
Health keeps child from attending school regularly	3%	0%	0%
Child does not seem well rested	11%	3%	4%
Parent or teacher has concerns about child's health or hygiene	19%	23%	15%

Percents may not equal 100 due to rounding

Figure 3.1
Teacher Ratings of Students—Cohort 1

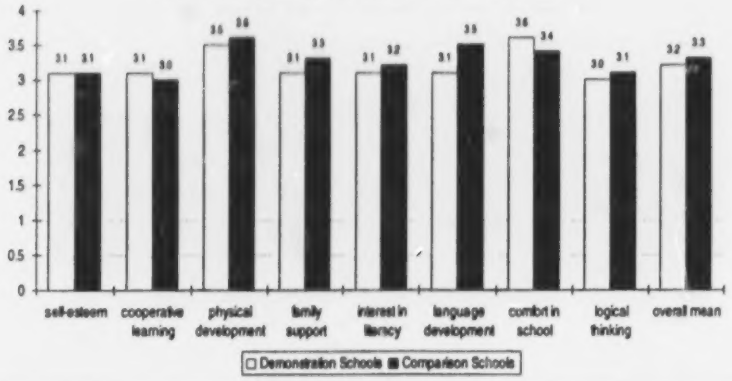
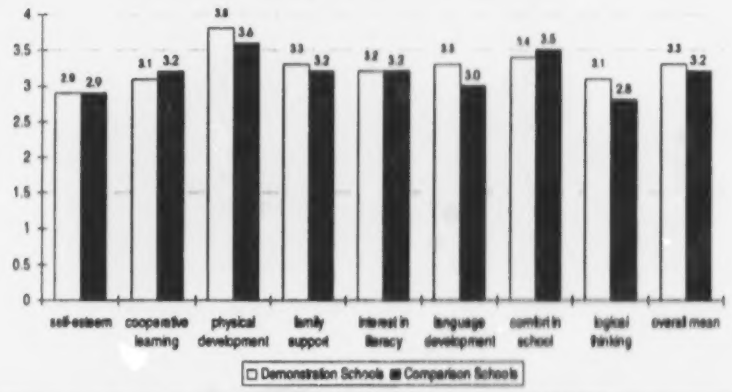


Figure 3.2
Teacher Ratings of Students—Cohort 2



CHAPTER

4 FAMILY SERVICES AND OUTCOMES

The Transition Project provides a variety of services to families. This chapter reviews those services and then presents data describing implementation of the family service component in Year Four, and also the effects of those services on family outcomes.

FAMILY SERVICES

The family is a primary focus of the Transition Project, just as it is for Head Start. Families receive Project assistance in a variety of areas: to help them determine current family needs, set goals, and access services; and to help them develop parenting skills, take an active role in their children's education, and become effective advocates for themselves and their children.

The linchpin for this structure of services is the Family Advocate. By developing a personal relationship with each family, the Family Advocate can assemble a customized system of services, training, and developmental opportunities. Service design and delivery may vary from site to site, but the most common elements are home visits, referrals to outside agencies, family needs assessments and action plans, connections between home and school, parent training, and regular meetings between parents and Transition staff. Other functions of the Family Advocates include visiting children in the classroom, following through on concerns about individual children as expressed by teachers, and completing follow-ups for physical health, mental health, and dental services.

FAMILY OUTCOMES

The Transition Project examines whether a broad array of intensive family services will result in improved parenting skills, greater economic stability for families, and more active involvement by families in their communities and in their children's schools. To measure program impacts for this evaluation, both national and local assessment instruments have been used, and a wealth of both quantitative and qualitative data has been gathered. National measures provide information on parenting behaviors, parent involvement in their children's schooling, and family access to and use of various resources. Locally-developed instruments examine both family use of public resources, and family involvement in school and community. Most results are presented by cohort, except for qualitative findings regarding the Project as a whole. These are presented separately afterward. In accordance with the multi-year evaluation design, some instruments were administered to only one Cohort during this program year.

COHORT 1

Level of Service

Table 4.1 presents a comparison of responses from Transition families and Family Advocates to questions regarding the types and number of services provided during the 1995-96 Transition Project year. Family responses were gathered during interviews conducted from March through July 1996, while Family Advocate responses were recorded in an end-of-school-year summary report.

The data show that Cohort 1 families agreed fairly closely with Family Advocates on the number of home visits and referrals they received during the year. On the issue of goals, parents and Family Advocates differed. While 58 percent of parents said they had set goals, Family Advocates said that 89 percent had; and

Table 4.1

Comparison of Family Interview Responses and Family Advocate End-of-Year Report
Cohort 1: Spring 1996

		Family Interview (n=24)	Family Advocate Report (n=28)
About how many times in the past year has your Family Advocate visited with you in your home?	Average ⇨	1.5	2.3
Did you talk with your Family Advocate about needs your family may have?	% Yes ⇨	54%	89%
Did you talk with your Family Advocate about setting goals for the year?	% Yes ⇨	58%	89%
Were you able to accomplish these goals?	% Yes ⇨	79%	33%
About how many times in the past year did your Family Advocate refer you to other organizations or agencies for needed health or social services?	Average ⇨	1.7	1.1

while 79 percent of parents said they had achieved their goals, Family Advocates said only 33 percent had.

In response to questions that gauged parent satisfaction with Transition services during the year, almost half (46 percent) of Cohort 1 families said the number of home visits and phone contacts by their Family Advocate was "about right," while another one-third felt that contacts were too few, and only four percent said there were too many contacts. Regarding referrals received through Family Advocates, two-thirds of the parents (67 percent) indicated they were satisfied. When asked to rate their overall satisfaction with the services provided by their Family Advocate, slightly over half (54 percent) said they were "very satisfied," while 17 percent said they were "somewhat satisfied," and eight percent said they were not at all

Table 4.2

Family Resource Scale—Response Frequencies
Cohort 1: Spring 1996

	Usually/Always Adequate			Seldom/Not at All Adequate		
	Transition*	Comparison*	Attrition*	Transition	Comparison	Attrition
Food for 2 meals a day	96%	96%	89%	4%	0%	0%
House or apartment	96%	96%	93%	0%	0%	0%
Money to buy necessities	86%	79%	63%	0%	13%	22%
Enough clothes for family	82%	75%	62%	4%	4%	23%
Heat for house or apartment	96%	100%**	63%	0%	0%	11%
Indoor plumbing/water	96%	100%	81%	0%	0%	4%
Money to pay monthly bills	86%	87%	59%	4%	0%	11%
Medical care for family	75%	74%	78%	11%	13%	4%
Dependable transportation	86%	75%	56%	7%	13%	22%
Child care/day care***	46%	33%	37%	4%	17%	4%
Dental care for family	74%	75%	67%	11%	8%	11%

* Transition n=28, Comparison n=24, Attrition n=27.
** p<.005
*** This item is most applicable to working families with young children, although before/after school care needs may be included in respondents' judgements. The following percentages of respondents indicated that this item did not apply to them: Transition=36%; Comparison=38%, Attrition=59%.

satisfied. Twenty-one percent expressed no opinion on this matter.

Economic Stability

Economic data for Cohort 1 families were collected in Spring 1996 using the *Family Resource Scale* (FRS). The FRS consists of 30 items for assessing needs and resources in households containing young children. Resources are rank-ordered from most basic to least basic, with respondents indicating whether each resource is "always," "usually," "sometimes," "seldom," or "not at all" adequate. For this report, 11 of the 30 items were selected so as to focus on the most basic needs. Table 4.2 shows the percentages of responses from each of the three groups. For this table, the responses were grouped into two categories: usually/always adequate or seldom/not at all adequate.

A high percentage of Transition and Comparison group respondents indicated that resources were usually or always adequate. On five of the 11 items more Transition families reported resources were usually/always adequate, while on four items more Comparison families did. On most items, differences between Transition and Comparison groups were small. However, on about half the items, the Attrition group reported greater need than either Transition or Comparison group. In a few cases, these differences appear dramatic, such as "money to buy necessities" (63% percent for Attrition families vs. 86% and 79% for Transition and Comparison families, respectively). On the item "money to pay monthly bills," 59 percent of Attrition families vs. 86 percent of Transition and 87 percent of Comparison families reported adequate resources. Despite these gaps, the difference between groups was statistically significant on only one item. Fewer Attrition group participants reported having adequate heat for their homes than did Transition or Comparison group participants.

A few findings from the FRS show areas of particular need:

- 4 percent of Transition families indicated food resources were either seldom or not at all adequate for two meals a day
- 11 percent of Transition families described medical care and dental care as seldom or not at all adequate—compared to 13 and 8 percent of Comparison families, respectively.
- After adjusting for those families who did not need child care, 4 percent of Transition families and 17 percent of Comparison families said that child care was seldom or not at all adequate

Table 4.3

Public Assistance—Percent of "Yes" Responses
Cohort 1: Spring 1996

Type of Assistance Received	Transition (n=28)	Comparison (n=24)	Attrition (n=37)
Medical Assistance	32%	42%	59%
Food Stamps	32%	38%	43%
AFDC	14%	17%	22%
WIC	11%	4%	19%[a]
Social Security Insurance	18%	21%	14%
Public Housing	18%	21%	11%
Mental Health Services/Counseling	4%	17%	16%
Energy Assistance Program	0%	0%	5%
Home Visits	0%	0%	3%
Parenting Education	0%	0%	3%
None	46%	29%	32%

[a] $p<.05$

Cohort 1 families were also asked about their use of public assistance. Results are shown in Table 4.3. Although there were no significant differences, a slightly higher percentage of Attrition families reported receiving four types of public assistance: medical assistance, food stamps, Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), and WIC. Furthermore, four times as many Comparison families as Transition families reported that they used mental health services (17% vs. 4%). On the other hand, a higher percentage of Transition families than Comparison families reported receiving no public assistance (46% vs. 29%).

Table 4.4

Parenting Dimensions Inventory
Average Scores
Cohort 1: Spring 1996

	Transition Parents (n=28)	Comparison Parents (n=24)	Attrition Parents (n=28)
Nurturance (36 points possible)	29.8	32.4	29.6
Responsiveness to Child Input (30 points possible)	19.8	20.3	19.9
Nonrestrictive Attitude (42 points possible)	23.2	23.7	22.0
Consistency (48 points possible)	36.1	34.0	33.9

Family Development

Desirable parenting behaviors were assessed using the *Parenting Dimensions Inventory*, which looks at eight areas. Four of the areas were analyzed for this report: 1) nurturing a child's developing sense of self; 2) responding to a child's views and interests; 3) maintaining an encouraging, nonrestrictive attitude toward a child's curiosity and exploration; and 4) applying rewards and discipline consistently. Mean scores for each dimension are shown by group in Table 4.4. This analysis reveals very few differences between groups, and none that have statistical significance.

Families of Cohort 1 children were also interviewed about their involvement in their children's education. This information was gathered using the instrument, *Family Involvement in Children's Learning*, which contains question and statement items about interactions that occur between families and their children's schools as well as items about recognition and management of learning experiences in the home. Data related to school and family relations are shown in Table 4.5, while data related to the home environment are shown in Table 4.6.

Families in all three groups generally reported satisfaction with school communication. For example, ninety-three percent of Transition parents, agreed with the statement "I am satisfied with the communication between my child's school and my family," as did 88 percent of Comparison

Table 4.5

Family Involvement in Children's Learning (School-Family Relations)
Response Frequencies[1]
Cohort 1: Spring 1996

	Strongly Agree/Agree			Strongly Disagree/Disagree		
Statement	T*	C*	A*	T	C	A
There are many ways for families to participate in this school.	93%	88%	79%	0%	4%	7%
I am satisfied with the communication between my child's school and my family.	93%	92%	75%	0%	4%	7%
I have a very good/pretty good understanding of my child's classroom activities.	79%	75%	54%	7%	13%	14%
My child's school asks for suggestions on how to improve parent/family involvement.	93%	71%	64%	4%	8%	18%
I receive good information from my child's teacher about how my child is doing in school.	89%	83%	89%	0%	13%	4%

				Average Number Attended		
Question	T	C	A	T	C	A
Average number of school-based activities/events offered to you (out of 12 described)?	9.2[a]	7.7	5.5	6.1[a]	5.3	3.3
Average number of school-rela[illegible]unteer opportunities available to you (ou[illegible]1 described)?	6.5[a]	5.6	3.4	4.1	3.7	2.4
Has anything prevented you from [illegible]rticipating in your child's school? (% Yes)	41%	35%	43%	—	—	—

1. Group percentages may not equal 100 on the statements. The remainders not shown represent the % of the group that neither agreed nor disagreed or did not know how to respond to the statement.
* T: n=28, C: n=24, A: n=28.
[a] $p < .005$

parents and 79 percent of Attrition families. Although the percentage of Attrition families agreeing or strongly agreeing with positive statements about school relations was much lower than other groups on four out of five questions, these differences were not statistically significant. Differences do exist, however, between Transition and Attrition groups on parents' reports of the average number of activities/ events and volunteer opportunities that were available to them and their participation levels. On these items, Transition group parents reported significantly higher numbers of opportunities and rates of participation than Attrition group parents.

When asked if anything prevented them from participating in their children's schools, 61 percent of Transition group families, 58 percent of Comparison group families, and 66 percent of Attrition group families responded affirmatively. More than four out of five Transition and Attrition group respondents reported that work schedules presented conflicts,

Table 4.6

Family Involvement in Children's Learning (In the Home)
Response Frequencies
Cohort 1: Spring 1996

How often do adults in your family do the following with your child?:	3-7 Times a Week			1-8 Times a Month			Less than Monthly/ Almost Never		
	T*	C*	A*	T	C	A	T	C	A
work on things she/he is learning in school?	82%	79%	86%	14%	17%	11%	4%	4%	4%
play?	89%	92%	68%	7%	8%	29%	4%	0%	4%
read or look at books?	72%	67%	54%	25%	29%	39%	4%	4%	8%
discuss TV programs that your child watches?	71%	79%	46%	29%	13%	43%	0%	8%	11%
discuss current events or community happenings?	39%	63%	57%	50%	29%	39%	11%	8%	4%
Has you child's teacher suggested activities to work on together (%Yes)	86%	75%	64%						
If so, how often do you work on these activities?	33%	47%	44%	58%	41%	45%	8%	12%	11%
How many hours does your child watch TV, video-tapes, or play videogames on a typical…	**0-2 Hours a Day**			**2-4 Hours a Day**			**4 or More Hours a Day**		
	T	C	A	T	C	A	T	C	A
… school day?	39%	58%	50%	54%	37%	43%	7%	4%	7%
…weekend day?	21%	13%	21%	36%	58%	61%	43%	29%	18%
	Yes								
	T	C	A						
Are there rules for your child about TV?	89%‡	88%	66%						
If yes, do the rules pertain to:									
• what program child can watch?	96%	95%	94%						
• how early or late she/he may watch?	84%	90%	94%						
• how many hours she/he may watch overall?	72%	86%	83%						
• how many hours she/he may watch on weekdays?	92%	76%	89%						

* T: n=28, C: n=24, A: n=28.
‡ $p<.05$

while 67 percent of Comparison parents reported similarly. Of families who cited barriers, child care was mentioned by approximately one-fourth of Transition families and about one-fifth of Comparison and Attrition group parents.

Most Cohort 1 families positively described involvement in educational activities with their children outside of school. Four out of five Transition families interviewed said they worked together at home either every day or every other day on subjects the children were studying in school, as did 79 percent of Comparison families and 86 percent of the Attrition families interviewed. Seventy-two percent of Transition families reported reading books with their children every day or every other day, while 67 percent of Comparison group parents and 54 percent of Attrition group parents did so.

Cohort 2

Level of Service

Responses about Transition services from the Cohort 2 Transition families and their Family Advocates are shown in Table 4.7. Cohort 2 families agreed with Family Advocates that they had received an average of approximately two home visits during the year. Families also said they received an average of two referrals for services from their Family Advocate, but Family Advocates reported only one referral per family on their year-end reports. Regarding needs and goals, Family Advocates reported a higher rate of families who had discussed and set goals, while families estimated that a higher proportion of goals had been achieved (67% vs. 50%).

The majority of Cohort 2 families said they were satisfied with the attention they received from the Family Advocates. For example, 59 percent reported the number of home visits and referrals was "about right," while 31 percent said it was too low and three percent said it was too high. In addition, all of the Cohort 2 families interviewed reported they were satisfied with the types of assistance they received through referrals made by the Family Advocates. When asked about their overall satisfaction with Family Advocate services, 48 percent of the families said they were "very satisfied," 28 percent said they were "somewhat satisfied," and 21 percent said they were "not at all satisfied." Three percent expressed no opinion.

Economic Stability

Cohort 2 families reported the kinds of economic support they received during the year from a number of different types of

Table 4.7

Comparison of Family Interview Responses and Family Advocate End-of-Year Report
Cohort 2: Spring 1996

		Family Interview (n=29)	Family Advocate Report (n=25)
About how many times in the past year has your Family Advocate visited with you in your home?	Average ⇨	2.1	2.0
Did you talk with your Family Advocate about needs your family may have?	% Yes ⇨	62%	84%
Did you talk with your Family Advocate about setting goals for the year?	% Yes ⇨	52%	84%
Were you able to accomplish these goals?	% Yes ⇨	67%	50%
About how many times in the past year did your Family Advocate refer you to other organizations or agencies for needed health or social services?	Average ⇨	2.2	0.9

public assistance. Percentage responses for each group are shown in Table 4.8. While the levels of support vary widely, significant differences between groups exist for only a few of the categories. For example, 50 percent of Attrition families reported receiving medical assistance (most often AHCCCS), compared to 33 percent of Transition families and 17 percent of Comparison families. Also 42 percent of Attrition families as well as 41 percent of Transition families said they received food stamps compared to only 17 percent of Comparison families. In addition, more Attrition families (35 percent) said they participated in WIC than Transition families (11 percent) or Comparison families (13 percent).

Family Involvement and Development

The Family Involvement in Children's Learning instrument was administered to families of Cohort 2 children in Spring 1996. Results are shown in Tables 4.9 and 4.10. Respondents from both Transition and Comparison groups were positive about the level of communication and collaboration with the schools. Eighty-nine percent of Transition families, 90 percent of Comparison families, and all the Attrition families agreed they received good information about their children's progress. Ninety-five percent of Transition families, 90 percent of Comparison families, and 84 percent of the Attrition group said there were many opportunities for them to participate in the schools. More Comparison parents than Transition and Attrition group parents, however, reported a thorough understanding of their children's activities in school.

When asked whether anything prevented parents from participating in their children's schools, a majority of families in each group (Transition, 59%; Comparison, 73%; Attrition, 80%) reported barriers. For more than two-thirds of these respondents, work schedules conflicted. Child care was cited as a problem by 32 percent of Transition group families, 18 percent of Comparison families, and 25 percent of the Attrition group families. Notably, although the Transition group has the largest proportion of Spanish-dominant families, it was the only group in which no one reported that language prevented school participation.

Regarding learning in the home, Transition parents were twice as likely to regularly help their children with work sent home by the teacher (50 percent vs. 26 percent of Comparison parents). Comparison families, however, were more likely to work with their children frequently on school work in general (65 percent vs. 55 percent). And while Transition family members were a little more likely than Comparison families to read books or discuss current events with their children more than a few times a week, they were less likely to discuss TV programs the children watched or to play together. Ninety percent of Transition parents and 82 percent of Comparison parents said they had established rules for their

Table 4.8

Public Assistance—Percent of "Yes" Responses
Cohort 2: Spring 1996

Type of Assistance Received	Transition (n=37)	Comparison (n=30)	Attrition (n=26)
Medical Assistance	33%	17%	50%[a]
Food Stamps	41%	17%	42%
AFDC	11%	10%	27%
WIC	11%	13%	35%[a]
Social Security Insurance	19%	7%	19%
Public Housing	11%	17%	8%
Mental Health Services/Counseling	5%	7%	8%
Energy Assistance Program	3%	0%	12%
Home Visits	3%	0%	0%
Parenting Education	0%	7%	0%
None	41%	40%	31%

[a] $p<.05$

children's television viewing, and half of each group said they permitted their children to watch no more than two hours on any school day.

Overall

Qualitative information was gathered to determine how Transition parents in each cohort viewed the family services component overall. This was accomplished in two ways: through questions in the Local Family Interview in Spring 1996, and in focus group discussions with both Spanish-speaking and English-speaking parents.

Local Family Interview Questions

The Local Family Interview forms include an open-ended question that allows family members to describe their level of satisfaction with the Transition Project and changes they would make in the program. Spring 1996 responses are presented in Appendix C.

Of the families who responded to the local interview questions, 54 percent of Cohort 1 and 48 percent of Cohort 2 said they were "very satisfied" with the services provided by the Project, and the great majority said they would make no changes because, in the words of one respondent, "everything they do is pretty good." Approximately one-quarter of the respondents in both cohorts said they were only "somewhat satisfied" overall with services, but most said they would change nothing, while others remarked only that they would like more services or better contact with their Family Advocate in the summer. Those families that said they were "not at all" satisfied with the overall level of service (8 percent of Cohort 1 and 21 percent of Cohort 2) mostly remarked on lack of communication from their Family Advocate or disappointment with staff turnover—their replacement Family Advocate had not been as available, communicative, or well trained as a previous one, they said.

Focus Groups

Participants in the five focus group discussions said that the central strengths of the Transition Project are the family services, parent involvement, and family development components. Many of those who made critical comments actually valued these

Table 4.9

Family Involvement in Children's Learning (School-Family Relations) Response Frequencies[1] Cohort 2: Spring 1996

	Strongly Agree/Agree			Strongly Disagree/Disagree		
Statement	T*	C*	A*	T	C	A
There are many ways for families to participate in this school.	95%	90%	84%	3%	7%	4%
I am satisfied with the communication between my child's school and my family.	84%	97%	92%	11%	0%	0%
I have a very good/pretty good understanding of my child's classroom activities.	81%	87%	80%	85	7%	4%
My child's school asks for suggestions on how to improve parent/family involvement.	85%	77%	68%	11%	7%	8%
I receive good information from my child's teacher about how my child is doing in school.	89%	90%	100%	3%	3%	0%
				Average Number Attended		
Question	T*	C*	A*	T	C	A
Average number of school-based activities/events offered to you (out of 12 described)?	8.5[a]	7.0	6.1	5.8[a]	4.4	3.5
Average number of school-related volunteer opportunities available to you (out of 11 described)?	6.7[b]	4.9	4.5	4.4[a]	2.9	1.8
Has anything prevented you from participating in your child's school?	84%[b]	63%	56%	—	—	—

1. Group percentages may not equal 100 on the statements. The remainders represent the % of the group that neither agreed nor disagreed or did not know how to respond to the statement.

* T: n=37; C: n=30; A: n=25.

[a] $p < .005$

[b] $p < .05$

services but wanted them at a more intensive level. As one parent who expressed the desire for more home visits remarked, "It's okay how it is, though. Because in any case, I know there is always a person there with whom I can talk about whatever need I may have whenever the need arises."

Participants in the two parent focus groups agreed that the Project presented a real opportunity for improving the circumstances of families members, both as parents and as individuals. One parent remarked, "Financially [the Project] has improved our circumstances." Another parent, though unhappy about infrequent contact with her Family Advocate, reported "[when] we didn't have any money or food, I called a Head Start Transition person at the school and told her I needed a food box and she brought me several boxes within three hours." Comments about the Project's impact on family

Table 4.10

Family Involvement in Children's Learning (In the Home)
Response Frequencies
Cohort 2: Spring 1996

How often do adults in your family do the following with your child?:	3-7 Times a Week			1-8 Times a Month			Less than Monthly/ Almost Never		
	T*	C*	A*	T	C	A	T	C	A
work on things she/he is learning in school?	54%	60%	76%	46%	33%	24%	0%	6%	0%
play?	70%	80%	88%	30%	17%	12%	0%	3%	4%
read or look at books?	70%	60%	64%	30%	34%	32%	0%	7%	4%
discuss TV programs that your child watches?	58%	57%	60%	36%	37%	28%	6%	7%	12%
discuss current events or community happenings?	43%	30%	40%	46%	54%	52%	11%	17%	8%
Has your child's teacher suggested activities to work on together? (% Yes)	84%[a]	63%	56%						
If so, how often do you work on these activities?	42%	37%	50%	52%	20%	50%	6%	5%	0%
How many hours does your child watch TV, video-tapes, or play videogames on a typical…	**0-2 Hours a Day**			**2-4 Hours a Day**			**4 or More Hours a Day**		
	T	C	A	T	C	A	T	C	A
… school day?	59%	47%	48%	41%	50%	44%	0%	3%	8%
…weekend day?	24%	27%	28%	38%	50%	48%	38%	23%	24%
	Yes								
	T	C	A						
Are there rules for your child about TV?	94%	87%	76%						
If yes, do the rules pertain to:									
• what program child can watch?	94%	92%	100%						
• how early or late she/he may watch?	91%	88%	89%						
• how many hours she/he may watch overall?	80%	77%	89%						
• how many hours she/he may watch on weekdays?	86%	73%	95%						

* T: n=37; C: n=30; A: n=24.
[a] $p<.05$

relationships included: "We get along better at home," "It has helped me so much—I was really struggling," and "Fathers are more involved."

Summary of Findings for Families

Level of Service

- More than half of Cohort 1 families were very satisfied with the services of their Family Advocates and two-thirds said they were satisfied with the referrals provided by their Family Advocate.
- Nearly half (48 percent) of Cohort 2 families said they were very satisfied overall with the services and referrals provided by their Family Advocate.

Economic Stability

- For Cohort 1, the Family Resource Scale revealed few differences between groups in the adequacy of basic resources. In terms of public assistance, however, a significantly higher percentage of Transition families participated in the WIC program.
- For Cohort 2, a significantly higher percentage of the Attrition group reported participating in WIC and receiving medical assistance.

Parent Involvement and Development

For both Cohort 1 and Cohort 2, respondents from all three groups were generally satisfied with the quality of communication and collaboration with their children's schools. They also reported being relatively active in educational activities with their children outside of school.

Overall

Data gathered about Transition services for families show that all of the intended services are being provided and that parent satisfaction with those services is fairly high. Focus group participants affirmed the critical importance of the family service component and—through both praise and criticism—acknowledged the impacts such services can have on families.

CHAPTER

5 SYSTEMIC CHANGE AND SYSTEM OUTCOMES

Expected outcomes from the Transition Project include systemic changes both at participating schools and districts and in the Head Start programs themselves. Among the anticipated changes are new means of collaboration between schools and Head Start programs, more effective strategies for smoothing a child's transition into the public school system, incorporation of Transition-type services into schools' existing educational delivery systems, and the institution of school policies that ensure service continuity after the end of grant funding. In addition, public school teachers are expected to increase and improve developmentally appropriate practices in their classrooms.

Data for Year Four regarding these proposed systemic changes was primarily qualitative in nature. Information was gathered from surveys of teachers and Family Advocates, observations of classrooms and significant program meetings and activities, and focus group discussions with a variety of project participants.

DAP IN THE CLASSROOM

During April and May 1996, classroom observations were conducted to directly evaluate DAP. Observations were made in all Transition and Comparison classrooms in which there were at least two participating children during the 1995-1996 school year. Two instruments were used. The first, an instrument used nationally and locally since the first year of the study, is the *Assessment Profile of Early Childhood Programs*. It contains items that rank DAP in terms of classroom practice, and it also provides an assessment of environmental indicators along six subscales. The subscales are: availibility of learning materials, learning environment, scheduling, curriculum, interacting, and individualizing. Results from the *Assessment Profiles* are shown in Table 5.1.

The data show that Transition classrooms rank higher than Comparison classrooms in five of the six subscales. Differences on three of these were significant: "Availability of Learning Materials," "Learning Environment," and "Curriculum."

The second instrument, *A Developmentally Appropriate Practice Template (ADAPT)*, was introduced in a field-test version in 1995 and was included in the national core dataset as an optional instrument in 1996 to provide a more comprehensive picture of developmentally appropriate practice in classrooms. *ADAPT* provides a holistic measure designed to capture dimensions of teaching

Table 5.1

Classroom Observations with the Assessment Profile

Type of Assistance Received	Transition (n=14)	Comparison (n=16)	p <
Availability of Learning Materials	5.7	4.3	.02
Learning Environment (28 possible)	11.6	6.9	.001
Scheduling (15 possible)	6.7	6.5	—
Curriculum (28 possible)	15.9	10.8	.001
Interacting (23 possible)	17.0	14.4	—
Individualizing (18 possible)	13.0	13.2	—

and learning associated with DAP (M. Gottlieb, 1996). ADAPT results, shown in Table 5.2 are striking. In each of the domains and on the total score, Transition classrooms received significantly higher scores for DAP than Comparison classrooms.

The third method for evaluating DAP asked teachers to rate their own classrooms. Ratings were made during Spring of 1996 using the locally-developed instrument, *Innovation Component Checklist for DAP*. Results are shown in Figure 5.1. The ratings are based on a five-point scale: "5" indicates a component is fully implemented, while "1" indicates a component is not at all implemented.

On six of the nine DAP components, teachers on average rated their classrooms at "4" or above. On components 6 and 7 ("environment and materials" and "parent-teacher relationships") they gave their classrooms slightly lower ratings (3.5 and 3.6 respectively). On the ninth DAP component ("staffing") they gave a particularly low rating (2.6).

This low rating is supported by follow-up comments in which fully half of the responding teachers expressed concern about high student-to-teacher ratios and the scarcity of appropriately trained classroom aides.

Other narrative comments from teachers varied. Some requested more classroom space and DAP-related materials. A majority reported increased success involving parents in productive school relationships. One teacher, however, wanted more support from district-level administrators for parent involvement efforts. Another teacher stated that parents were generally unresponsive.

Overall, teacher ratings for DAP were higher in 1996 than they were in 1994. In most cases, however, rating differences are small. The greatest gain in ratings was for "teacher qualifications (4.0 in 1996 vs. 3.5 in 1994). The greatest drop in ratings was for "staffing" (2.6 in 1996 vs. 3.2 in 1994). Different teachers were surveyed for each rating period, however (kindergarten and first grade teachers in 1994; second and third grade teachers in 1996) so it is difficult to draw any firm conclusions from the increase.

To gain another perspective on DAP implementation, principals were asked in focus group interviews to rate the professional development component of the Transition Project. They expressed widespread satisfaction and reported that training in DAP and other professional development opportunities for teachers had been a key strength of the Transition Project. One principal remarked, "Our teachers have become more giving and open" as a result. Most said that DAP and other progressive methods would survive and flourish beyond termination of the Project.

Principals gave much of the credit for successful professional development to the project director and her pro-active support. One school principal specifically emphasized the importance of the project director's "organization and follow through" in this area.

Table 5.2

Average Scores for ADAPT

Domain *(30 points possible for each domain)*	**Transition** (n=14)	**Comparison** (n=16)	**p <**
Curriculum and Instruction: Promoting Children's Academic Development	17.5	12.5	.005
Interaction: Supporting Children's Social and Emotional Development	19.5	14.6	.002
Classroom Management: Facilitating Children's Overall Development	18.4	12.6	.003
Total Score	55.4	39.6	.002

Transition Services

Teachers and Family Advocates both completed checklists rating implementation of several Transition Project components. Family Advocates' responses were gathered on *The Family Advocate's Role in Providing Transition Services*, which includes seven components related to Family Advocates, while teachers responses were gathered on *The Teacher's Role in Transition Services*, which

includes eight components related to teachers. Only some of the components are identical on both checklists.

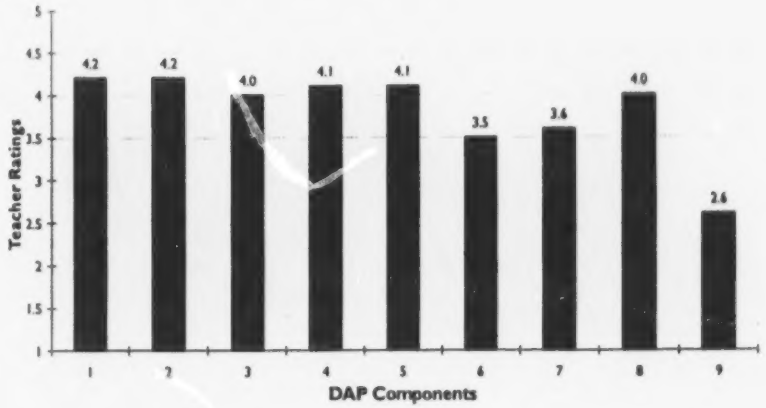
Results from the Family Advocates' checklist are presented in Figure 5.2. In general, the ratings are fairly high. Components 3 through 7 were given an average of "4" or above by Family Advocates, while components 1 and 2 ("communication between teacher and Family Advocate" and "transition of children grade to grade,") were rated only slightly lower.

Teachers' results are presented in Figure 5.3. Overall, they rated their components lower than Family Advocates, with only one component ('social services") receiving a 4.0. All others received ratings from 3.1 to 3.9 except for component 4 ("child educational services") which was rated 2.9.

For the three components that were most similar on each checklist, Family Advocate and teacher ratings were fairly close. For example, Family Advocates rated "collaboration with teachers" 3.7, while teachers rated "collaboration with Family Advocates" 3.8. Also, Family Advocates rated "transition of children grade to grade" 3.8, while teachers rated "transfer of records grade to grade" 3.9. On "parent involvement," Family Advocates gave a higher rating (4.0) than teachers (3.6), perhaps reflecting Family Advocates' greater contact with families.

On the issue of "child health," Family Advocates and teachers seem to disagree (4.5 and 3.8 respectively), but this result is somewhat misleading. A close

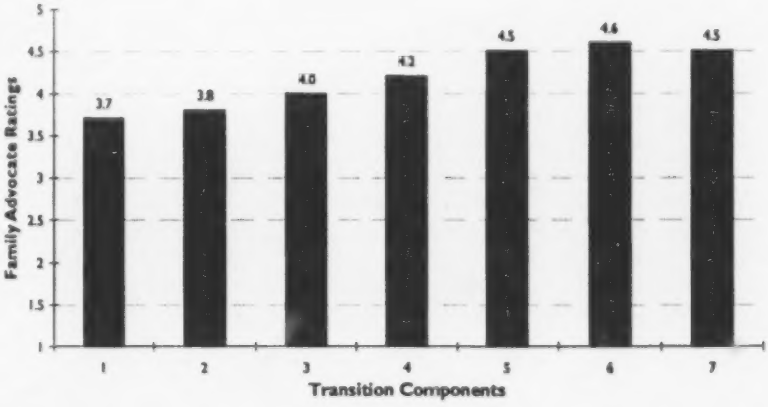
Figure 5.1
Transition Teacher Ratings of DAP Implementation, Spring 1996



DAP Components

1 = teacher-child interaction	4 = instruction	7 = parent-teacher relationships
2 = cultural and linguistic integration	5 = assessment	8 = teacher qualifications
3 = curriculum	6 = environment and materials	9 = staffing

Figure 5.2
Family Advocate Ratings of Transition Implementation, Spring 1996



Transition Components

1 = communication between teacher and Family Advocate	5 = child health
2 = transition of children from grade to grade	6 = collaboration with special program and other school staff
3 = parent involvement	7 = documentation of program services
4 = family services	

look at the checklists shows that each group rated a slightly different concept: for Family Advocates it was pro-active health care monitoring, while for teachers it was communication with the Family Advocates regarding health care issues. Thus, differences might be expected.

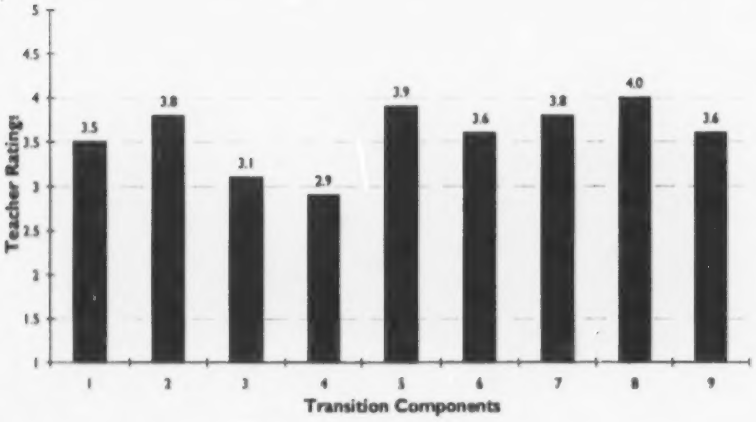
One result was not expected, however. Overall, staff ratings for Transition services were slightly lower after Year Four of the project than they were after Year Two of the project.

Collaboration

Data for evaluating the Projects' success in achieving collaboration was collected on the *Survey of Collaboration*, which was given to Transition teachers, Family Advocates, and principals at all three Transition schools in Spring of 1996. The survey consists of 20 items grouped under three headings: "Project Mission and Vision"; "Project Development and Organization"; and "Key Leaders." Responses follow a Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree). Results are displayed below.

Mean ratings on the survey range from 3.4 for "Project Mission and Vision" to 3.6 for "Project Development and Organization" to 3.8 for "Key Leaders." While these ratings are not low, they suggest that respondents are not convinced that collaborative practices have been completely successful thus far.

Figure 5.3
Teacher Ratings of Transition Implementation, Spring 1996



Transition Components

1 = communication between teachers grade-to-grade
2 = communication between teacher and Family Advocate
3 = transition activities for students and families
4 = child educational services
5 = transfer of records grade-to-grade
6 = parent services and involvement
7 = child health
8 = social services

Perspectives of Stakeholders

To gather richer, more qualitative information than survey data could provide, evaluators conducted focus group discussions with four separate groups of stakeholders: English-speaking parents, Spanish-speaking parents, teachers, and Family Advocates. Institutional outcomes and systemic change figured prominently among the topics each focus group addressed. Results are presented in summary below.

Perspectives on Effective Practices and the Overall Impact of the Transition Project.

Most focus group participants singled out the family services component of the Transition Project as having produced the greatest positive impacts. These services, they said, led to significant improvement in communication and interaction among parents, teachers, and children.

Focus groups specifically credited Family Advocates for a number of the positive results—some immediate (*e.g.*, providing food boxes and shelter to newly-evicted families) and others more long lasting. Many teachers praised Family Advocates for assuming burdens that otherwise would have fallen on teachers, or not been addressed at all. For example, home visits were cited by one teacher as having created warm and productive Family Advocate-child relationships and making children and teachers feel more comfortable interacting in the classroom. Several teachers and parents, however, expressed anxiety over the status of Family

Advocate functions after the conclusion of the Project. Even teachers whose schools had previously offered some Transition-like services agreed that the role of Family Advocates was unique and that teacher-parent relations had benefitted noticeably from Project services.

Improved parent involvement was repeatedly cited as a positive impact of the Project. This was in sharp contrast to the first two years of the Project when considerable concern had been raised about this area. Now, however, one teacher said that, because of Family Advocates, "parents work in the classrooms, they're taking classes in English, they're taking citizenship classes...I never have to worry about field trips, I always have eight or nine people." A teacher at another school claimed having "95 percent" Hispanic parent attendance at various school events and class activities. And while members of a primarily English-speaking parent group said that a broader range of activities (beyond formal meetings) was needed to encourage more parent involvement, primarily Spanish-speaking parents had nothing but praise for the current approach, asserting not only that Transition had instilled greater self-confidence in them and their children, but that attenuation of the parent-school communications link was beginning to take place in fourth grade (*i.e.*, after completion of the Transition period).

A potential drawback of the parent involvement emphasis was noted by one teacher. Some parents, this teacher said, risked "burn-out" if they had participated in the Transition Project since inception or had more than one child in a Transition classroom. The cause was continual pressure to attend school activities regardless of conflicting work or schooling schedules. Burned-out parents also resented the burden of multiple permission forms and other paperwork.

Health services were regarded by most of the focus group participants as the centerpiece of the family services component. Family Advocates emphasized the increased level of attention paid to dental problems and other child health issues. One Family Advocate remarked, "Schools don't screen kids for dental services, but the Transition Project does." Many parents mentioned dental screenings, immunizations, and nutrition classes as valuable elements, and one teacher said, "when you have a [health] problem with a child, you just tell the Advocates and they run with the ball..." Another teacher commended a mental health specialist for offering to observe her classroom and give feedback about the teacher's interaction with her students.

Several focus group participants mentioned bilingual services and greater cross-cultural sensitivity as particular benefits, although there was some disagreement on this issue. A Family Advocate said the Transition Project helped one school recognize its need to hire bilingual classroom aides and offer other bilingual services, and a member of the Spanish-speaking parents' group said that home visits helped teach the parent English. A primarily English—speaking parent, however, complained that growing attention to bilingual English-Spanish education at her child's school had led her to withdraw her child from a Transition classroom for fear the child's academic progress would be held up while her classmates worked to improve their English.

Impact of the Transition Project on the Relationship Between Schools and Head Start

Teachers were nearly unanimous in noting that the Transition Project had significantly improved communication and collaboration between Head Start staff and public school staff. Teachers at two schools said that positive steps had been taken to ease the transition from the Head Start program into kindergarten—for example, by arranging for children to visit kindergarten classes while they were still in Head Start. In addition, one teacher commented that, as a result of the Project, she was now more likely to seek out and question her predecessor about a child.

Despite the advances, some focus group participants pointed out room for improvement. A few teachers complained that, even after the four years of the Project, non-Transition teachers at their schools still did not understand its purpose and regarded it as an isolated program. It was also noted that the close communication developed during the transition from kindergarten to first grade tended to break down in later grades. Such concern might explain the comment of one parent who, when asked how things might be improved, suggested "more cooperation between the Head Start staff and the elementary school."

Focus group participants widely regarded the manager of the Head Start Transition Project as the single most important link. According to one focus group participant, the manager is "the end-all and be-all" between Head Start and the schools. Teachers repeatedly cited the developmental literature, school visits, and training opportunities the project manager made available as one of the most significant and lasting effects of the Project on their teaching approaches. The impact of the project manager as an individual has been so great, in fact, that it may raise concern about successful institutionalization of Transition practices once she is no longer directly involved.

Institutionalization of Transition Practices

The question "What happens after the Project ends?" was a key issue for focus groups. Those who expressed concern about overburdened staff and a perceived lack of school district support for DAP and other Transition practices were most worried. Said one: "Nothing will be institutionalized unless it comes out [at] the bottom line." Of particular concern with several parents and teachers was the predicted "disappearance" of the Family Advocates after grant funding ended.

The majority in the focus groups, however, expressed optimism about the future. Nearly all said that as direct participants in the Project they had been permanently and positively changed and would continue to pursue Transition goals. Transition teachers, for example, said their experiences and training during the Project served as lessons that would continue to guide them; one teacher even insisted that she would make home visits herself when there were no longer Family Advocates to do so. Many parents also asserted they were willing to take more active roles in their children's education in the future. One Spanish-speaking parent talked about being profoundly affected by the program because it had advised parents not only about a parent's *responsibilities* but also about a parent's *rights* (*e.g.*, to initiate contact with a teacher about a child's progress). A Family Advocate implied that the Project had increased teachers' and administrators' awareness of the bilingual and health care needs of students, and this awareness the Family Advocate said, would not evaporate at the end of the Project.

Focus group participants predicted that the Transition Project might also continue to influence the attitudes of those who had not participated in the Project directly. One teacher, for example, noted that Transition parents at her school had begun "networking" with parents of non-Transition students. This effort, the teacher said, was successfully encouraging non-Transition parents to become more involved in their children's schooling.

CHAPTER

6 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

Multiple sources of data indicate that all components of the Transition Project were implemented as required in 1995-96, and that parents and educators had high levels of satisfaction with the four areas of comprehensive, family-centered Head Start-like services: education, health, family development, and parent involvement. Results from local measures also show that systemic changes have taken root at both the Head Start programs and the public schools. Much of the more quantitative national core data, however, generally do not show overall significant differences between Transition and Comparison groups in terms of cognitive, social, attitudinal, or health gains. In this chapter, these findings are discussed and possible explanations explored.

CHILDREN AND TRANSITION

Academic outcomes for children were measured by several different instruments: four subtests of the Woodcock Johnson Achievement Tests - Standard Battery, Revised; the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test or its Spanish equivalent, Test de Vocabulario en Imagenes Peabody; writing samples from students; and the Teacher Ratings of Students. The latter instrument also allowed teachers to assess the academic, social and physical development of the students.

On the standardized tests of achievement, no significant differences occurred between groups in either cohort when the effects of English as a Second Language were statistically controlled. On Teacher Ratings of Students, Cohort 2 Transition students were rated higher by their teachers than Comparison counterparts in language development, logical thinking, and physical development.

Attitudes toward school were solicited by the What I Think of School measure. Students reported their views in three areas: their academic efforts and achievements, their relationships with teachers and classmates, and their feelings and attitudes about school. On this instrument, the more mobile Cohort 1 Attrition students related greater difficulty getting along with other children at school than did Transition and Comparison students, most of whom had not changed schools between kindergarten and grade three. All other responses on this instrument tended to be highly positive and showed no significant differences.

Child health was rated by parents as part of the Family Interview. Parents in both cohorts and all treatment groups generally gave positive reports concerning their children's health. No significant group differences appeared.

CONFOUNDING VARIABLES

When interpreting the above results, caution must be taken to consider three known confounding effects: high attrition rates, variations in English proficiency among students, and the existence in Comparison schools of Transition-like services. Each of these may affect the validity and the reliability of data.

Some attrition (defined as students and families who have moved from their original treatment group) was expected in this program. However the magnitude of attrition from the local and national evaluation studies was even greater than anticipated, raising concern because of the threat that high attrition poses to the validity of longitudinal research results. Locally, attrition has not only been high but also has varied among groups. For example, by Spring 1995 the percentages of Arizona's Cohort 1 students still

in their original treatment condition were only 47 percent for the Transition group and 38 percent for the Comparison group. Percentages for Cohort 2 were 80 percent for the Transition group and 43 percent for the Comparison group. Overall, only 42 percent of Cohort 1 students and 58 percent of Cohort 2 students remained in their original treatment groups by Spring 1996. There is no way to know how different results would be if more of the original participants had remained in the study. Making generalizations about treatment effects becomes very difficult in this situation.

The achievement test scores of language minority children are compromised when standardized tests are available only in English, as they are in this study, with the exception of the TVIP. For children whose primary language is not English, the scores may reflect their understanding of the English language rather than their level of achievement in other subjects. Students in the Head Start Transition Project varied greatly in their English proficiency. In Spring 1996, Cohort 1's Transition group had 36 percent Spanish-speaking students, while the Comparison group had 26 percent and the Attrition group had 20 percent. Meanwhile, the Cohort 2 Transition group had 41 percent Spanish-speaking students, while the Comparison and Attrition groups each contained only 30 percent. Teachers were asked to identify students for whom English-only tests would not be appropriate. Even so, English proficiency varied so widely among students that the effect of language on test scores cannot be determined.

Conducting an evaluation in a natural school setting often means there is no true control group against which treatment effects can be measured. In this study, because the "comparison" group is not a "no treatment" group, and eliminating all confounding influences in a natural setting is not possible. In this Project, isolating "treatment" has been particularly difficult because several Transition-type services were found to be offered to Comparison group families. For example, one of the cornerstones of Head Start Transition is parent involvement because it is linked to improved student academic performance. Two of the three Comparison schools, however, also concentrated on parent involvement: one received a major two-year federal grant specifically to increase parent participation, while the other received federal funds to establish a parent program with staff based in an on-campus parent room.

Other crossovers of Transition services also occurred. All three Comparison schools had ongoing, on-site Head Start programs that offered families of preschool children home visits, referrals, and other services. Since many families had children in both Head Start and Comparison classrooms, they received Transition-like services without being in the Transition group. In addition, state educational initiatives that happened to coincide with the Transition Project promoted Transition-like services to all public schools. These services promoted developmentally appropriate practices in the classroom, and procedures to smooth transitions both between grades and between Head Start and public schools. In sum, the influences of all of these service cross-overs cannot be isolated and measured.

Families and Transition

The families of children enrolled in Transition classrooms received a broad array of services through the Project and were generally happy with them, according to surveys and other data. Parents continued to view the Family Advocate as the central component of the Transition Project. Although there was some disparity between Family Advocates and parents in how they recollected the intensity of their interactions, the majority of parents were satisfied with the level of service they received.

In terms of economic stability for Cohort 1, differences between Transition, Comparison, and Attrition groups appear to be minimal as self-reported on the *Family Resource Scale*. For the very basic necessities, most respondent's reported having adequate resources, although a small proportion of families indicated inadequate money to buy necessities, access to medical/dental care, and dependable transportation.

With a few exceptions, Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 families reported similar rates of participation in public assistance programs. Within each cohort, participation rates tended to be similar for Transition, Comparison, and Attrition families. Some differences between groups existed for five public programs. For three of these, Transition families showed a significantly higher enrollment than either

Comparison or Attrition families. Whether this reflects the effectiveness of the Family Advocates in linking people with services or greater need of the Transition families is not known. In general, however, all groups showed dramatic decreases from their enrollment in public assistance programs at each cohort's entry into the Transition Project. This may be evidence of increased self-sufficiency for all groups.

A primary goal of the Transition Project is increased family involvement in education. Results of the *Family Involvement in Children's Learning* instrument reveal that the vast majority of Transition, Comparison, and Attrition group parents had positive interactions with and involvement in their schools. While most parents reported ample opportunities to participate in the school, more than one-third reported that their work, child care needs, or other factors prevented participation.

Parents also reported a positive pattern of involvement in home education activities. Most parents in all three treatment groups reported engaging their children in play, reading, story-telling, and discussion three to seven times a week. Most families said they had rules about television and video viewing, but families differed in how much time they allowed their children to watch. These reports provide a strong indication of active parent involvement in children's learning.

The System and Transition

The overarching goal of the Transition Project is to develop collaborative strategies that facilitate a smooth transition of Head Start children and their families into the public school kindergarten and primary grades while providing continuous and comprehensive services for the children and their families. A number of predictions were developed on the basis of that goal: that Transition classrooms would be more developmentally appropriate than Comparison classrooms; that transition strategies would involve collaboration of staff from both the public schools and Head Start; and that services for children and families would be more accessible, coordinated, and comprehensive.

The data collected for Year Four generally indicate the Transition Project has been successful in producing systemic change. The data, which are primarily qualitative, were gathered through surveys of teachers and Family Advocates; by observations of classrooms, program meetings, and activities; and from focus group discussions with various project participants.

Teachers rated themselves on their use of developmentally appropriate practice in the classroom using the locally-developed instrument, Innovation Component Checklist for DAP. As a group, the teachers gave high ratings to their implementation of most of the DAP components in Year Four, but slightly lower ratings for parent-teacher relationships and classroom environment and materials. Continuing a trend, the teachers gave their lowest ratings for staffing ratios, some pointing to a lack of trained classroom aides. This component has received some of the lowest ratings over the life of the Project.

Overall, teacher ratings for DAP were higher in 1996 than they were in 1994. In most cases, however, rating differences are small. Different teachers were surveyed for each rating period, however (kindergarten and first grade teachers in 1994; second and third grade teachers in 1996) so it is difficult to draw any firm conclusions from the increase.

In classroom observations of DAP, Transition classrooms received significantly higher scores than Comparison classrooms on four of the six domains of the Assessment Profile. Transition classrooms were rated higher in terms of the following: 1) availability of learning materials - indicating that materials for children's use are visible and within their reach; 2) learning environment - indicating that the physical arrangement of the room and materials used represent developmentally appropriate practice; 3) curriculum - indicating that children actively participate in guiding their own learning, efforts are made to individualize the curriculum where necessary, and alternative teaching techniques are used to facilitate learning; and 4) interacting - indicating that the teacher interacts positively and is responsive to children, and positively manages their behavior. These results provide strong evidence that staff training, teacher visits to other classrooms, and the wealth of DAP literature provided to Transition teachers by the project manager have had real, observable benefits in terms of classroom practice.

On the survey, The Teacher's Role in Transition Services, teachers rated their

implementation of transition services on a checklist of eight components. Teachers gave relatively high ratings overall. Most narrative comments addressed specific challenges or suggested ways to improve Transition services. On the survey The Family Advocate's Role in Providing Transition Services, Family Advocates rated several items similar to the teachers' survey. On those items, ratings by Family Advocates were nearly identical to those of teachers. The Family Advocates' slightly higher numbers on two components, parent involvement and child health, may reflect differences in roles and differences in wording of the questionnaires.

Teachers, Family Advocates, and school administrators completed the Survey of Collaboration, which asked them to rate the extent to which collaboration, a key factor in effecting systemic change, had figured in the 1995-1996 year of the Transition Project. These key participants gave only slightly above average ratings. This suggests they were not convinced that collaborative practices have been completely successful thus far.

Focus group discussions with various participants in the Project spotlighted a number of successes in producing systemic change. All groups praised the central role of the Family Advocates, the effectiveness of home visits in ensuring service delivery and improving parent-Family Advocate-teacher relations, and the resulting rise in parent involvement. Many focus group participants gave the Transition Project credit for improving health services for children and families and for sensitizing teachers and school administrators to bilingual needs and other cross-cultural issues.

Teacher focus groups also credited the Transition Project with improving communication between Head Start staff and public school staff, which eased student transition from preschool into kindergarten and beyond. The Head Start Transition Project manager was widely regarded as the linchpin of this positive connection. Teachers noted, however, that room for further improvement in the Head Start-public school collaboration still existed.

The majority of focus group participants said they were optimistic about the institutionalization of Transition practices and policies. Although many expressed concern about the loss of funding and other support after the Project ends, participants expressed their determination to find ways for preserving at least no-cost elements of the program.

Conclusions

Findings from the qualitative data for the fourth year of the study confirm the Transition Project's continuing positive impact on participating teachers, schools, and the Head Start agency. Collaboration, while not perfect, is seen as a shared value among stakeholders, and it is viewed as something that works for the benefit of children and families. The Transition services offered, especially those of the Family Advocate, are viewed as crucial in attaining smooth transitions for children and families. The efforts to implement and nurture developmentally appropriate practice in the primary grades have resulted in observable differences between Transition and Comparison classrooms; Transition teachers believe the trend toward DAP will survive well beyond the end of the Project. All participants cited ways in which the Transition Project benefits them, whether through direct services, referrals and support of families by the Family Advocate, or the learning and linking of two separate systems for a common purpose.

The quantitative data collected by standardized instruments for the National Core Data Set, however, show few significant differences between Transition groups and Comparison groups for Year Four. A number of factors may (alone or in combination) explain why this is so:

- The hypothesis that Transition Project services will produce measurable positive outcomes for children and families may not be supported.
- The instruments used to evaluate results may not accurately measure desired Project outcomes; specifically, standardized achievement measures may not be appropriate to capture the impacts of DAP approaches to early childhood education or accurately assess skills of children with limited English proficiency.
- Differences between groups may not emerge until grade four or later because all Head Start alumni, including the Comparison students, may carry their Head Start gains through grade three even without continued services.

- Transition intervention may require more than four years to produce desired outcomes.
- The additional services provided by the Transition Project may not go far enough beyond standard practices at Comparison schools to produce a measurable effect.
- For some families, the extent and intensity of existing social services--which the Transition Project relied upon heavily for referrals and linkages--may not be adequate to effect positive changes.

Promising Practices

Family Advocates increase parent involvement in the school by providing language assistance to Spanish-speaking families. Teachers in Transition classrooms report that having a translator available to the classroom--usually the Family Advocate--increases parent involvement in school activities. Focus group and family interview data also support the finding that readily available language assistance in the classroom encourages parent involvement.

Family Advocates increase two-way communication between parents and teachers and improve multi-cultural understanding. Family interview data and focus group results provide strong evidence of the value that Family Advocates have added to the Transition Project. Parents, some of whom said their own educational experiences had not been positive, related that Family Advocates gave them new perspectives on school and the importance of parental participation. In addition, the direct services and links to community resources the Advocates provided helped families meet their needs and redirect time and energy to support childrens' learning. Teachers also noted that they could work more effectively with pupils when they had information about what was going on at home. Both school staff and parents praised the Family Advocates for increaasing awareness of and sensitivity to Hispanic cultures.

Focus on helping staff implement Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) in the classroom generates positive teacher support and produces significant changes in classroom practice. Early childhood experts agree that DAP is the best approach to meet the needs of young children, a view shared by Transition Project management. By sharing knowledge about DAP, encouraging teachers to implement DAP strategies, and connecting teachers to training opportunities and current literature on DAP, the Project management ensured that DAP was implemented to the extent possible. Surveys, interviews, focus group results, and evaluator observations in the classroom support the finding that DAP has taken hold in Transition classrooms.

Challenges

Administrative activities performed by Family Advocates diminish the time available for direct services to families. Focus group data and evaluator observations indicate that Family Advocates spend an inordinate amount of time on non-service related activities such as paperwork and meetings. While documentation and staff communication are important, they compete with the needs of families and children--the targets of this program. Efforts should be made to streamline Family Advocates' administrative duties and minimize other demands on their time.

Emphasis on understanding Hispanic cultures may overshadow other cultures in the schools. Some parents have expressed a desire for a focus on other cultures as well as Hispanic cultures in the schools. While Hispanic families may predominate, many other cultural groups are represented in the schools.

Recommendations for the Collaboration

Institutionalize low and no-cost components of the Transition Project. Focus group results reveal broad support for many low and no-cost Transition components, such as developmentally appropriate practice in the classroom, joint planning, and parent activities. These components should be incorporated into the policies of Transition partners without delay. Further discussion should also explore service gaps and coverages, leading to a consensus on the elements of the Transition Project that provide the most value. This strategy will ensure the sustainability of Transition goals over time.

Create a central forum to encourage the sharing of planning information, program experiences, and strategic solutions. Many valuable lessons have been learned regarding how to transition students, encourage parent involvement, and provide comprehensive family services. These lessons could be lost without a formal effort to document and share them. Documentation and sharing could be accomplished by means of staff in-services led by Transition teachers and Head Start personnel, a readily accessible file system of plans and ideas, and Internet-based searchable pages. Among the items that could be shared are successful classroom strategies--for example, one teacher described setting up a classroom "parent corner" that includes a bulletin board for information, suggestions for home activities with children, and a bin of classroom tasks for any parents who wish to volunteer. This model could help countless other teachers encourage parent involvement.

Look for alternative funding sources for continuing Family Advocate services. Most evaluation results have spotlighted the crucial role that Family Advocates play in delivering Transition Project services. Nearly all participants have expressed concern about the departure of the Family Advocates at the termination of the program. School and district administrators should explore alternative funding sources, such as grants, direct assistance from agencies (*e.g.*, Vista or Americorp), or collaboration with other agencies to provide Family Advocate-type services.

Transition Project leaders should reexamine the strategies Family Advocates utilize for working with "difficult" families. While Family Advocates have been praised for their assistance to many families, they have not effectively reached all families. Often, the hardest-to-reach families have the greatest need. A closer look at the skills and strategies that Family Advocates bring to their outreach efforts may point out areas where further training can improve their success.

Recommendations for the Evaluation

Explore more fully the variables that appear to mitigate results. Attrition, duration of treatment, and English language proficiency all affect outcomes of the Transition Project. Each should be studied to determine its effect. Do Attrition students differ in important ways from Transition or Comparison students? Does "time in treatment" as an indicator reveal significant trends when results are analyzed longitudinally? What are the full impacts of English language proficiency on school success, and do school policies toward language acquisition have any effect? Further analysis along these lines may provide valuable insights.

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Appendix A

ARIZONA HEAD START - PUBLIC SCHOOL TRANSITION PROJECT: LOCAL EVALUATION PLAN

PRINCIPAL GOAL: Develop successful collaborative strategies that facilitate the smooth transition of Head Start children and their families into the public school kindergarten and primary grades while providing continuous and comprehensive services for the children and their families.

DESIRED OUTCOMES	EVALUATION QUESTIONS	EVALUATION METHOD	DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS
CHILDREN			
1. When compared to children in Comparison classrooms, children in Transition classrooms will demonstrate greater:	1. Do Head Start (HS) children in Transition classrooms maintain and/or show gains to a greater degree than children in Comparison classrooms on the following indicators?		
a) cognitive / language development,	a) cognitive skills	a) –pre/post and time series measures of cognitive and academic progress and growth –teacher report	a) -PPVT-R (child) -N- –Woodcock-Johnson-R Reading & Math (child) -N- –Teacher Rating of Students -L-
b) social skills and emotional development,	b) social skills and emotional development	b) –self-report, teacher report, parent report; survey and interview measures focusing on social/emotional adjustment.	b) –Social Skills Questionnaire (teacher & parent) -N-
c) development of good health,	c) general health	c) –student health records, teacher and parent surveys.	c) –Your Child's Health & Safety (parent) -N- –Child Health Questionnaire (teacher) -N-
d) overall success in the public school setting.	d) adjustment to the public school setting	d) –self-report, teacher report, parent report of successful adjustment to school; attendance and retention data.	d) -Your Child's Adjustment to School (parent) -N- –What I Think of School (child) N-
2. Children in Transition classrooms will exhibit more positive attitudes toward school than children in Comparison classrooms.	2. Do HS children in Transition schools exhibit more positive attitudes toward school than children in Comparison schools?	–self-report, teacher report –formal measures of attitudes toward school	Social Skills Questionnaire -N- What I Think of School (child) -N-
3. Compared to children in Comparison classrooms, children in Transition classrooms will experience a smoother transition and continuity of programming:	3 Do HS children in Transition classrooms experience:	–parent, child, teacher survey/interview data –classroom observations.	Your Child's Adjustment to School (parent) -N- School Survey of Early Childhood Programs (teachers and principals) -N-
a) from HS to kindergarten, and	a) a smoother transition and better continuity of programming from HS to kindergarten?		
b) from one primary grade to the next.	b) a smoother transition and better continuity of programming from one primary grade to the next?		

DESIRED OUTCOMES	EVALUATION QUESTIONS	EVALUATION METHOD	DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS
FAMILIES			
4. When compared to Comparison families, HS families receiving transition services will be more stable, self-sufficient and empowered to cope with the stresses of contemporary life by:	4.Do Transition families:	–family interview –focus groups –participation data	Getting to Know Your Family: Family Background Interview and Updates (parents) -N- Family Routines Inventory (parents) -N- Your Child's Health & Safety (parents) -N- Parent Health: Depression Scale (parents) -N- Neighborhood Scales: Sec. B (parents) -N- Local Family Interview questions -L-Focus Groups (parents, teachers, family advocates) -L- Family Service Records Review -L- Family Resource Scale (parents) -N-
a) seeking out appropriate service providers to meet their needs,	a) receive more social service support through the public school system (contact with Family Advocates) than Comparison families?		
b) displaying knowledge and use of preventative health, dental care and mental health resources for their children,	b) show more evidence of stability and self-fficience than control families?		
c) utilizing community resources (e.g., public libraries),			
d) participating in community activities (e.g, voting, family events),			
e) improving job skills, and			
f) financially supporting their families.			
g) over time, reducing their overall dependence on social services,			
h) becoming less transient			
5. Families will improve their capacities to be:	5. When compared to Comparison families, do Transition HS families show:	–family, teacher, child interview/survey data. –indicators of child support (e.g., read with child at home) through self-report, participation records.	Family Routines Inventory (parent) -N- Parenting Dimensions Inventory (parent) -N- Participation Data (parents) -L- Focus Groups -L-
a) nurturing parents,	a) improved parenting skills?		
b) involved in and supportive of children's education.	b) more involvement in and support for education?		
6. Parents will improve their literacy and English proficiency.	6. Do parents in Transition schools participate in and complete more literacy and ESL classes and workshops than parents in Comparison schools?	–participation in literacy, ESL classes	Participation and Completion Data (parents) -L-
7. Home-school communication will be enhanced.	7. Do parents in Transition schools perceive home-school communication to be more effective and satisfactory than parents in Comparison schools?	–indicators of level of home-school communication and satisfaction with that communication.	School Climate survey (parents, teachers, principal) -N- Local Family Interview Questions -L-

DESIRED OUTCOMES	EVALUATION QUESTIONS	EVALUATION METHOD	DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS
SYSTEM			
8. Head Start staff, Family Advocates, Transition school staff, and social service providers will collaborate to provide more coordinated services to children and their families.	8. Do Transition schools provide a more coordinated service delivery system (i.e., continuous and comprehensive) than control schools?	Process evaluation of system change will be accomplished through case studies of Transition schools, including documentation of the collaborative process between Head Start staff, public school staff, and social service staff. Will use survey, interview, and observation data.	Family Background Interview -N- Local Family Interview Questions -L- Focus Groups (teachers, parents, HS staff, Family Advocates, principals) L- Observation/documentation of Transition team process -L- Innovations Configuration Checklist L-
9. Transition schools staffs will:	9. When compared to Comparison schools, do Transition schools:	--surveys and interviews of Head Start, public school, and social service staff --observation data	All of above, plus: School Survey of Early Childhood Programs (principals, teachers) -N- Assessment Profile for Early Childhood (classroom observation instrument) -N- Parent participation records -L-
a) provide a developmentally appropriate curriculum	a) provide a more developmentally appropriate curriculum for the primary grades?		
b) improve communication between HS and K teachers, and among primary grade teachers,	b) develop more satisfactory communication strategies with HS programs and among primary grade teachers?		
c) provide needed staff development,	c) provide staff development that primary level staff perceive to be meeting their professional growth needs?		
d) provide increased opportunities for parental participation in the decision making process--at the school and classroom levels.	d) provide more opportunities for primary level parents to participate in the decision-making process ?		
10. Transition school teachers will be empowered by:	10. Are Transition school primary level teachers more skilled in working with the special needs of at-risk children and the staff who serve the families than Comparison school primary level teachers?	--surveys and interviews of Head Start, public school, and social service staff --observation data	All of above, plus: Staff participation data and staff surveys on their perceptions of the effectiveness of training activities.
a) participating in planning and implementing the change process,			
b) acquiring awareness of the needs of at-risk children			
c) developing sensitivity to diverse cultures.			
d) acquiring skills which enable them to work more effectively with at-risk children,			
e) acquiring skills in working with family advocates and other social service agencies and staff.			

DESIRED OUTCOMES	EVALUATION QUESTIONS	EVALUATION METHOD	DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS
POLICY			
11. Head Start, in collaboration with the public Transition schools, will:	11. Based upon data gathered through case studies:	–surveys and interviews of Head Start, public school, and social service staff –observation data	Family Background Interview -N- Local Family Interview Questions -L- Focus Groups (teachers, parents, HS staff, Family Advocates, principals) L- Observation/documentation of Transition team process -L- Innovations Configuration Checklist -L- School Survey of Early Childhood Programs (principals, teachers) -N- Assessment Profile for Early Childhood -N- Parent participation records -L-
a) identify effective strategies and practices for collaboration	a) What are the most effective strategies and practices for collaboration?		
b) develop and disseminate a model for creating systemic change.	b) Is a model for change developed and disseminated to other Transition sites?		
c) determine what a successful collaboration looks like.	c) What does a successful collaborative process look like?		
12. Public policymakers will recognize the benefits of and fiscally support an educational model which addresses child and family needs in a holistic and comprehensive manner.	12. Did the results of this project affect state and local level public policies and level of fiscal support to reflect a more comprehensive plan for addressing child and family needs in a holistic manner?	–monitor state and local level policies related to early childhood education.	Summary of relevant state and local policies.

N = Instrument is part of the national core data set.
L = Instrument developed for use in the local evaluation.

Appendix B

SUMMARY OF DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

A Developmentally Appropriate Practice Template (ADAPT): This instrument is designed to measure dimensions of teaching and learning associated with developmentally appropriate practices in early childhood classrooms. After an hour of observation, eighteen descriptors are each rated on a five-point continuum to assess three classroom domains: curriculum and instruction, interaction, and classroom management. In addition specific criteria are used to complete an overall classroom summary.

Assessment Profile for Early Childhood Programs: This classroom profile is intended to provide a quantitative measure of classrooms and teaching practices as they reflect developmentally appropriate practice. The Research Version used in this study includes 91 criteria organized into five scales: learning environment, scheduling, curriculum, interacting, and individualizing. Observation involves observing physical characteristics of the room and interactions between the teacher and the students. Each item is scored either "Yes" (observed) or "No" (not observed or not observed consistently).

Child Health Questionnaire: Teachers and parents rate the child's general health and well-being. The parent questionnaire is part of the Fall family interview. The teacher questionnaire is completed each Spring.

Family Background and Update: This information is initially collected in the Fall family interview, with select items followed-up in the Spring. Items relate to family demographics, socioeconomic factors, family characteristics, and support services the family is receiving.

Family Resource Scale: This instrument is designed to measure the extent to which different types of resources are adequate in households with young children. The scale includes 30 items rank-ordered from most-to-least basic. The FRS is based upon research on family systems theory which posits that needs drive behavior, and since these needs can be arranged in order from most to least important, family emphasis is likely to be directed to meeting unmet needs that are high in the hierarchy (i.e., the most basic). The FRS is included in the Fall family interview and is verbally administered by the interviewer. Parents respond using a five-point rating scale designating 1) not at all adequate, to 5) almost always adequate.

Family Routines Inventory: Also embedded within the family interview, the FRI presents 28 family routines to be rated as to the frequency with which each is performed in the household. The instrument is intended to assess the extent of predictability or routinization in daily family life. The four-choice response ranges from "almost never" to "daily." The national statistical analysis of this instrument showed that items did not load into the subscales for this population. Only select items from the FRI that are highly related to local evaluation questions are included in the local analysis.

Family Services End-of-Year Summary: This form, completed by Transition Family Advocates at the end of each year, includes a summary of the number of contacts made

with Transition families, the number of referrals made, and the number of hours parents have documented for working with their child at home on school work and volunteering for or participating in school activities.

Focus Groups: Focus groups are small discussion groups designed to obtain information about the perspectives of various project participants and stakeholders toward the Transition Project. An interview protocol consisting of eight to ten open-ended questions is developed for each group, with the discussion loosely following the question outline. Participants are encouraged to engage in exchange of ideas and to explore various aspects of the project in depth.

Innovations Component Checklist: Three separate checklists were developed according to the guidelines for constructing them provided by Hall and Hord (1987). They are part of the Concerns-Based Adoption Model for assessing the change process. Each instrument describes the components of an innovation, such as Transition services, and three levels of implementation, from no implementation to full implementation. Program participants (teachers and family advocates) then rate the degree to which they believe the program is being implemented. Teachers complete a checklist on developmentally appropriate practice and Transition services; Family Advocates complete a checklist rating Transition services.

Local Family Interview Questions: The local interview questions are designed to supplement the national family interview by asking questions directly related to transition services and local evaluation questions. Items include whether services are available to families, whether they are accessed, and whether they are adequate. One set of questions is asked of both Transition and control families; another set of questions relating directly to Transition services is asked only of Transition families.

Neighborhood Scales: With this instrument, parents rate how they view their own neighborhood on several aspects. Included are neighborhood cohesiveness, barriers to services, negative affects (how neighbors interact), social control (how likely people would be to intervene in a problem situation), probability of success for children, and an overall rating of their neighborhood compared to other neighborhoods. Parents respond using a five-point likert scale from 1) strongly agree to 5) strongly disagree.

Parenting Dimensions Inventory: The PDI is based on a multi-dimensional model of parenting which integrates hierarchically organized concepts drawn from the parenting literature. The hierarchy attempts to account for the parent-child relationship on a continuum that ranges from abstract constructs of parenting through behaviors that characterize daily interactions. Four of the eight dimensions of the PDI are included in the family interview: nurturance, responsiveness to child input, nonrestrictive attitude, and consistency.

Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-Revised (PPVT-R): This test is designed to measure a person's receptive (i.e., hearing) vocabulary for Standard American English. It can be used with individuals ages 2½ through 40 who understand Standard English to some

degree. Each item consists of a choice of four pictures. The examiner names one and the child points to the picture named. Items are arranged in order of increasing difficulty and only the range of items appropriate to a person's abilities is given.

Social Skills Rating System: This system is designed to assess student social behavior. The SSRS provides a social skills rating based on norms from a national sample of over 4,000 children ages three through 18. The system is divided into subscales of cooperation, assertion, self-control, and responsibility. Parents and teachers rate individual children on how frequently they exhibit each of the 38 social behaviors. They also rate how important those behaviors are to them as parents and teachers.

Teacher Rating of Students: This rating system was developed by the evaluators of the Illinois Transition Project and adapted for use in the Arizona evaluation. The purpose of the measure is to obtain teacher judgments about student progress in eight areas of skill and adjustment to school. Ratings are made each Spring. The following eight areas are rated: self-esteem, cooperative learning, physical development, family support, interest in literacy, language development, comfort in school environment, and logical/scientific/ mathematical thinking. Teachers rate each child on each area using a four-point scale: 1) requires considerable development; 2) needs some development; 3) generally a positive area; and 4) strongly positive area.

Test de Vocabulario en Imagenes Peabody (TVIP): This test is the Spanish-language, Hispanic-American adaptation of the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-Revised (*PPVT-R*). It measures an individual's receptive, or hearing, vocabulary for single Spanish words and shows the extent of Spanish vocabulary acquisition for the subject. Test construction and administration are the same as the *PPVT-R*.

What I Think of School: Children report their own perceptions of their early school experiences through engaging in a dialogue with the examiner. Eight key questions are asked about the child's attitude toward school. Children indicate their responses by pointing to choices on a rating card. The three-point scale ranges from 1) least positive response, to 3) most positive response. The instrument can be used with children ages four to eight.

Woodcock Johnson Tests of Achievement-Revised (WJ-R): This battery of tests measures cognitive abilities, scholastic aptitudes, and achievement. It can be used with individuals at all levels of education, preschool through adult. Four of the nine subtests included in the Standard Battery are used in the Transition study: WJ-22, letter-word identification; WJ-23, passage comprehension; WJ-24, calculation; and WJ-25, applied problems.

Appendix C

Responses on Local Family Interview Open-ended Questions
Spring 1996 Data
(Combined Cohorts 1 and 2)

"Overall, how satisfied are you with the services provided by your Family Advocate?"	"If you could change anything about the types of service your Family Advocate provides, what would it be?"
Very	I wouldn't change a thing. I thought all this was very helpful.
Very	Have a better list of referrals.
Very	Nothing, I guess, because everything they do is pretty good.
Very	Need more Family Advocates.
Very	Have a better list of referrals.
Very	More Family Advocates.
Very	Nothing (16)
Somewhat	Contact/make aware of the resources that are available.
Somewhat	More communication and information.
Somewhat	Not sure what the Family Advocate's purpose is.
Somewhat	More information, especially about summer school.
Somewhat	I wish I could get ahold of them during the summer because that is when I have questions. I wish we had same Family Advocate in Head Start
Somewhat	Nothing (7)
Not at all	More communication is needed.
Not at all	More communication.
Not at all	After our first Advocate left, the new Advocates never let me know them. The Family Advocates should present themselves like the first one did. Also, get to know the family and keep communication going, hooking up with community activities.
Not at all	This year the Family Advocate has not been around. I could have used the assistance, but I do not know her. Has not been in contact with the Family Advocate but is doing fine.
Not at all	Encourage them to want to help more often, especially in emergencies.
Not at all	The new Family Advocate needs to be better trained and the staff needs to be right on top of Family Advocate personnel.
Not at all	Have not talked to the Family Advocate all year. I have not even met her.
Not at all	They should pay more attention to the families and contact them more often.
Not at all	Keep in touch more. Follow through.
No opinion	Wouldn't change a thing. I never really needed anything, although I know who my Family Advocate was and how to get in touch with her if I needed anything.
No opinion	They should know what is best.
No opinion	Availability
No opinion	Nothing

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